

Neil S. Kaye, MD, and Bob Sadoff, MD will answer questions from members related to practical issues in the real world of Forensic Psychiatry. Please send question to [nskaye@aol.com](mailto:nskaye@aol.com).

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Q. I want to get more cases, especially civil cases, how do I go about growing my practice?

A. Sadoff: 1) Contact the leading forensic psychiatrist in your area and let him/her know of your interest and qualifications and experiences. Most good forensic practitioners are busy and may have cases they cannot handle. You may get a referral.

2) Contact the professor of forensic psychiatry in your area and ask to study with him/her. Does she have a seminar you can attend?

3) The best way to grow your practice is to do a good job with the cases you have. You will be surprised when the attorney on the other side of your case calls you as his/her expert next time.

4) Let attorney friends know of your interest and experience and offer to lecture at one of their bar association functions gratis. You will make a number of contacts that way.

5) Let your attorney know that you are interested in various cases both civil and criminal.

6) Publish an article in a psychiatric journal or in a bar association journal on the subject you wish to consult on.

7) Present cases or papers at local, regional, and national meetings where you will be noticed and your work cited.

8) All of this takes time and patience and quality work to build a practice. Continue to treat patients or work in a clinic or hospital or even a correctional facility to let people know of your special interests.

9) What I would not do is advertise as it often is not successful. Word of mouth referrals by other attorneys or colleagues is most effective.

10) Good Luck! (you may need that as well)

A. Kaye:

1. First and foremost, be an excellent psychiatrist and clinician. If your clinical work is respected, lawyers will want you to be their expert. And, your experience is essential in making you an expert.
2. Do free talks for the local legal community. Call the Bar Association or the Trial Lawyers Association and offer to speak for free at their weekly/monthly seminars. Pick a topic you know well and do a simple, straightforward talk. Leave time for lots of questions so that the lawyers can see how you can think on your feet.
3. If you like to write, try submitting short pieces to legal magazines. Lawyers don't read scientific journals unless they have to, but they read their own magazines. Remember, they are your audience, not your peers. I did an article on psychiatric tips for managing difficult legal clients in 1989 and 20 years later I still get referrals from that article.
4. Stick to your principles and stand by your opinions. You won't always have the opinion the lawyer wants. Don't apologize for that. You earn respect by being honest.
5. Give good customer service. Return calls promptly. I always provide a free "curbside consult" to lawyers where they can run a case by me to get my sense of the issues. I never charge for this. It is appreciated and remembered, and always results in a case at some future point in time.
6. Teach your colleagues. Most psychiatrists don't want to do forensics. Let them know you are interested and available. Get involved with the local psychiatric society, offer free consultation to the Board of Medical Practice, Victims of Violent Crime Board, or Medical Society. Serve on the legal committees of professional organizations in your region. You'll get known as they "go-to" person because of your high profile. This public service is rewarding, educational and great for your curriculum vitae.
7. Maintaining a website in today's world is expected and appreciated and is not advertising. It allows people to contact you and get a sense of who you are. Don't go crazy trying to get rankings on search engines; it's a waste of money.
8. Work for both sides. Lawyers will try to label you as a defense or plaintiff expert. Do your best to get cases from both sides of the aisle.
9. Public speaking to service organizations (Rotary International, Kiwanis, etc.) provide great opportunities to network with a wide variety of people who may later need your services. A talk on testamentary capacity always, especially if you can do it with an estate planner, lawyer, or CPA is a great way to get known.

10. Have fun and enjoy the work! If you look relaxed and happy at what you do, people will be impressed. If the case isn't for you, refer it elsewhere.