

0091 Marketing Speedbumps in a Trans-Focused Practice

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This podcast is sponsored by the Abundance Party, where for only \$39 a month you get courses on honing your niche and marketing your practice, scripts for the business side of things, monthly trainings, a chance for a one on one with me, and a much more intimate Facebook group. Where I currently respond to every post. You can check that out at Abundanceparty.com. Alright, onto the show.

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Allison: Welcome to the Abundant Practice Podcast. I'm your host, Allison Puryear of Abundancepracticebuilding.com and abundanceparty.com. and I'm here with one of my community members, both virtually and in real life. This is Kimberly Vered Shashoua. She is with Vered Counseling. That's VERED. And she has a lot to share with us today about having a trans focused and supportive practice. So, thanks so much for being here, Kimberly.

Kimberly: Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me.

Allison: Of course. So, we were talking about some of the differences in marketing a private practice when you have a trans focused practice. Can you talk to us some about what you have tried that has worked for you? And how it may be a little bit different for your client population?

Kimberly: Yes. So, as most people building a practice, they are like, okay, these are the tips. You should do this. You should do that. And I ran into a few things that I'm like, oh. This was like a minefield. Or this would be very helpful to know. So, one of the things that I think is most different for therapists trying to work with transgender clients, attract them to your website, your business page, is Facebook and Facebook ads. So, I know, y'all probably have heard, like oh, the election and Facebook, and they were just like everybody do all these different ads. So as a response, Facebook has really tightened up anything that they think is a possible political ad. So, what that looks like for therapists, if you use the word transgender, it automatically gets flagged by their system. And, then, even if it's like hey, do you need therapy? Like it's a very explicit, not even pro-transgender, like transgender therapy here, that gets flagged. And when I'm talking to some of my other friends building their practice, they have never encountered that. They haven't had to deal with that. So that's just something to know that it's not really a great system. And when you do make an ad that gets incorrectly flagged as political content, Facebook basically gives you two options. You can request a manual review, or you can go through a very invasive registration process to register yourself as a, I forget what they call it, but basically a

political agent. Where they have your driver's license and I think maybe even social security. And address, all this stuff on file. Just to run a Facebook ad.

Allison: Oh, my gosh. That's insane.

Kimberly: But, yeah, 90% of my ads that use the word transgender are flagged. And what I usually do, because I, it's a lot of work and it's a matter of principle that I don't want to register as a political agent. But I always request a manual review. And one time, the review got denied, and then another review took place, and the second review finally got approved. But, it's like the people reviewing the system, it's not very sophisticated. It's not really meant to handle the areas of nuance where it's not promoting something political. It's just like a hot topic. But, yeah, what I've done when I have had an ad that has not been approved, even after a manual review, is I scrap it. I make almost pretty much the same ad again, and I go through the process. And sometimes the reviewer I get, or sometimes it just doesn't get flagged, there's not really a system. It's more Facebook is not really able to figure out what's going on in any streamlined way, and just keep trying again, until you're able to slip through.

Allison: Wow. Okay. That takes a lot of work. Like, Facebook ads already take a lot of work. We just had a great training in the party about them, actually, that walked us through, here's every single step to take. And mine got bounced back because it had the word diet in it, because I'm talking about diets don't work, in my video ad. Yeah, it got bounced back because I used the word diet. But then I'm not having to register as a political person. I just kind of do what you're saying, I'm just going to do this for manual review and see what happens next. So, it's interesting that it gone that far, that now you're a political agent as a result of your client population.

Kimberly: Right. And one day, I made two ads, one for teen girls and one for transgender teens. The one for transgender girls was like, it was fine. Nothing. But as soon as I had the word transgender, they were virtually identical in every way. But the transgender one ended up not being approved even after the manual review. And that's when I was like, no, I'm not registering as a political agent because y'all can't get it together.

Allison: Right. Wow.

Kimberly: Yeah. Which, I mean, not to get too political, but it also says a lot if someone's just basic identity, who they are, requires you to register as a political agent. It's like, okay, this population needs people that will really fight for them. Because this is discrimination. Just, burdensome, etc. etc.

Allison: Yeah.

Kimberly: So, another pitfall that I experienced with my ads for transgender teens, but not just for teens in general, is hate speech.

Allison: Like you were accused of hate speech or other people [unknown 7:32] yeah.

Kimberly: So, I would consistently get a ton of hate speech on my ads. And it would be kind of hilarious. Like hate speech is never light hearted. But it would be things like, leave us hetro's alone. Looking at this, that would be like support group for trans teens. And get these sorts of responses that would be way overblown. So, Facebook, I'm sure you're aware, they keep on changing and updating like things you can search for, the things you can exclude. Because Facebook is always getting in trouble for not following the law. So, you used to be able to target by political party. They can't do that anymore. But

now I've been removing people with interests that I feel would be more likely to do hate speech. Let me tell you first a little bit about how Facebook does its calculation of interest. Because this is also really terrible. So, Facebook thinks you're interested in a topic if you really like it or really hate it. Because that's like, oh, they are interacting a lot.

Allison: Right.

Kimberly: So, on all my ads for transgender stuff, I will have, has to be interested in transgender, [unknown 9:02] etc. to make sure the ad is relevant, so it gets shown to people who hate equal rights. Who hate transgender people. Which is again, seriously. It's basically putting it in front of those people who would write these really absurd, horrific messages. So, what I've been doing is, I've been thinking, okay, someone who would write hate speech on Facebook, what would they be interested in, and I would do that as an interest. But, sort of a flip side with that, is people who are very supportive of transgender people who also really hate this other stuff, I won't be able to get my ads in front of them. And that's kind of a compromise I can live with because I feel like, what I have to do sometimes, is be super vigilant and check every so often, and just delete the hate speech. Because I don't want that popping into the feed of transgender people. I don't want to subject them to that, which means, I regularly look and screen for hate speech. Which is another thing I have never read on a how to use Facebook ad.

Allison: Right. And it takes a toll. Even when it's just dumb, it still takes an emotional toll on you, I'm sure.

Kimberly: It does. Yeah. And it both takes a toll, and also again, makes me very committed. Because I'm like, this shows how much this is needed. And how much people need advocates in whatever way can bear some of that emotional labor. And just be there and let them know there are these spaces. Because when I post something very innocuous, and it gets this flood. And the ridiculous thing I quoted was the mildest of stuff I've gotten. I've gotten some pretty messed up stuff, as you can imagine. It's like this whole area, there is so much need in this population really requires therapists who are all with that.

Allison: So, Facebook ads are a land mine, it sounds like. And like if you are choosing to use them for a trans-focused practice, then I'm really glad you gave all these heads up about what you might run into. What are some other things that you've tried that you've run into some unexpected land mines, or some unexpected results from?

Kimberly: One thing I did is, I hired a company to do Google Ads. Which I guess used to be called AdWords. Specifically, to support my transgender practice. Because I also offer online therapy in both North Carolina and Texas. So, there's a lot of need for confident transgender therapists, kind of all over the state. So, I'm like, okay, I want to get this out. And the company that I hired, they did a very good job, but I noticed they weren't really familiar with the topic, and there were things that were included that probably shouldn't have been included. And things that were excluded. So, I discussed there's a lot of negative stuff about transgender. There's also porn terms.

Allison: Oh, oops!

Kimberly: And like, some voyeuristic stuff, that I'm like, okay this is not like a therapy question, or therapy term here. And so, they also do negative keywords, which is stuff that we don't want showing up. And the word trans was one of the negative keywords.

Allison: I don't understand. Maybe I'm not supposed to understand. Maybe it's supposed to be confusing. What?

Kimberly: Right. Which is kind of the main thing that people would be searching for, like a word involved. So, what I ended up doing was sort of double checking their work. And, so I feel like one of the best things they did was add in a bunch of negative keywords. That was really helpful. Saved me a lot of time from having to do that on my own. So, I just sort of skimmed through and made sure that nothing like trans that is like, oh, well I guess nothing is running. And then there's also some transgender specific therapy terms. Like gender therapy. Or gender affirmative therapy. That they probably, not being in this specific niche, wouldn't know. And the other thing with that, just a tip, if you're doing AdWords, with transgender stuff to do either the phrase match which means that those words have to be somewhere. Or if you are doing a broad match, add a little plus for which kind of locks those keywords into the search. Because some of the broad match searches that come back that are like again, google [unknown 14:34] relates it, isn't necessarily relevant, but then again if you're not sort of in the field, you wouldn't know to screen that out. Another thing is that people do a lot of searching for voice therapy. Which is making your voice higher, lower, more feminine, masculine, and screening out having the negative keyword voice. That's something that the SEO people wouldn't really know about. Because they wouldn't really know all these different types of therapy. So, in Google Ads, you can go in and see what people are searching for. And one thing that I was surprised by was I was getting some hits from people looking up ICD codes.

Allison: Oh, interesting. Right. Because they are needing to be diagnosed in order to be able to, got it. Okay.

Kimberly: Yeah, so there would be that whole phrase there that I would want, then ICD before that, and I'd be like, okay. Come on. So, again, it's not catastrophic, but that is something where it does require kind of extra work, extra looking over to make sure that your ad is really going to the right people.

Allison: Yeah. And Google AdWords, Google ads, can be really expensive, too. So, I think it would be very important for you to be kind of checking over somebody's shoulder, if this is your niche, just because, they might not have this expertise like you do. Got it.

Kimberly: Right. Absolutely.

Allison: So what else have you found that has been effective as you're building your practice?

Kimberly: Another thing has been doing SEO. And that's another thing where I talk to someone to research different SEO keywords. And give me some ideas for blog posts. And again, some of those were kind of pornography related that they got back to me. But it was very helpful when you are in the world of like, okay, this is how you say it. This is what you are hearing. To have someone looking at what are people actually searching for?

Allison: Yeah.

Kimberly: Another thing I've been doing, no pornography involved, is I've been doing trainings and speaking for different therapists and also at schools and different organizations. Because this is something that a lot of therapists are like oh, I got zero training on this in grad school. I have

transgender clients, but I just never actually got any training. So, this has been both a great way to raise everyone's basic competency level, and also do networking at the same time.

Allison: Absolutely. Yeah. And it's not even just kind of your basic networking. You're able to be the expert, one of the experts in our area by virtue of speaking and training people. I think that's beautiful.

Kimberly: Yeah. So, that's kind of everything that I've done that I've found, for a trans-specific practice, has been either helpful or like, oh, man, I wish I knew that.

Allison: Right. Especially when you are really putting your all into Facebook ads, or Google ads, and you're full steam ahead. And then, you run into all these things that other therapists aren't running into. It's got to be really aggravating. I'm really grateful you're sharing this with everybody. Can you tell? I'm like, ah!

Kimberly: Thank you.

Allison: So, I know you had said there are some things you have not tried. That you think would be effective, but just like time, energy, all of that has prevented you from doing so at this point. What do you think are some things, if you needed to get more clients right now, you would be doing?

Kimberly: Right. Well one thing that you hear everyone talking about, is blogging and I ended up getting, during practice building, light sensitive migraines, which means staring at a computer screen to write a blog just didn't really become an option for me. But that is something I would absolutely recommend. And I think some of these things, like if you are using AdWords and you see what people are searching for. Or SEO. You can use those for specific blog topics without even having to brainstorm. It will just be right there.

Allison: Yeah. Its like a nice little cheat sheet.

Kimberly: Right! Another thing I think would be very effective if you have sort of the energy to overcome barriers, is networking with doctors. Now, I see a lot of teenagers, so that would be pediatricians for me. What I found is sometimes the front office people have been like, well leave a flyer and we'll read over it and then we'll get back to you. And it can be a very difficult field where it's like okay, these doctors, there's a way to get in and talk to them. I just haven't gone through all the hoops I need to get through to get in front of them.

Allison: Yeah. And I think it's doable, its finding your in. and often, that in is like a common client. And, if you can say, I'm sharing a client with Dr. So, and so. This is the kind of work I do, I'd love to get 5 minutes to consult about this client and future clients. Something like that., sometimes that gives you an in, if it's necessary to be talking about the client, of course. But that can be a way to get in there.

Kimberly: Absolutely. And that's why I'm like, I don't really have the energy right now to pursue that.

Allison: Fair enough!

Kimberly: That can definitely be a great referral source. Because a lot of parents or especially because the onset of puberty can be so distressing.

Allison: Of course, yeah.

Kimberly: that we'll talk to the doctor about that, and they will need someone to refer to. So, if you have the time and the energy to figure out your in, I would definitely recommend it.

Allison: Yeah. Well awesome. Well I really, really appreciate you coming on and telling us about these speedbumps that you, I'm sure there was more aggravation than it sounds like, and I'm eternally grateful for you making us aware of these. But I really appreciate you and appreciate what you are doing for our community. And, so thank you for that.

Kimberly: Absolutely. Well, thank you so much. And I want to say, this is also the tagline in my therapy and on my website, is it doesn't have to suck forever. For the clients and also for the therapists, trying to figure out the right way. It does not have to suck forever.

Allison: Sounds good. I'm going to co-sign on that. Well thanks so much for being on, Kimberly. And I'll see you around.

Kimberly: Alright. Bye.

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