

Constructing Your Imprint

Your imprint on the newsletters should, first of all, reflect who you are as a therapist – and this presents something of a challenge in a fairly limited space. The imprint in the text box also needs to provide complete contact information so that potential clients will know how to contact you. The text portion of the imprint is where you succinctly distill and present a few ideas about what distinguishes you from other therapists...and it presents your identity as a therapist to the client.

The Photo

Your photo is the first thing the client sees. It's your first impression for the client. In fact, by seeing your photo, clients build their own expectations about what it would be like to sit in front of you and work on their personal issues. The photo should reflect friendliness, professionalism, and understanding. Direct eye contact is a plus and provides a stronger impact when the client sees your photo.

Some EWM subscribers use a professional photographer, and this usually results in an effective photo. Photographers usually provide a CD of your photograph. Save the photo on your hard drive and send it to us via email attachment. Professional photos are usually taken at 200 or 300 dpi (dots per inch, or pixels) – and this provides a sharp image on the printed newsletters.

It is perfectly acceptable, however, to use a photo from a digital camera, and it is easy to save these on your computer directly from the camera. Snapshots often capture the essential you better than a professional photo. If you use a digital camera, try to have a close-up – digital cameras usually produce photos at 72 dpi, and you can still get a good, sharp photo if you have a close-up shot (if a distant shot has to be enlarged, it creates a pixelated look which is not adequate for printed newsletters). A photo at 72 dpi is usually more than adequate, however, for an online version of the newsletters such as the HTML version or the PDF version. If you use a digital camera for your photo, try not to stand too close to a wall behind you since the flash on the camera produces a dark shadow behind your head – and the outline of your hair might not be seen with this shadow.

If you have a group practice, the entire group, of course, can be shown in the photo.

Some people prefer to show their logo in the space at the top of the imprint instead of a photo. The drawback of using a logo is that the potential client doesn't have a chance to see who you are. The advantage is that the logo portrays your brand – and this sticks in the mind of the client. You can, of course, use both a photo and a logo on your imprint. If there isn't enough room for both the photo and logo in the text box, the logo can be placed near your return address on the back page of the newsletters.

Contact Information

The following information might be placed in the text box –

Your Name, followed by your degrees (M.A., Ph.D., MSW, LCSW)

Your title (e.g., Psychologist, Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, etc.)

Your License Number (this is optional, depending on your state requirements)

Your Office Address

Your Office Phone Number

Your Fax Number (this is optional)

Your Email Address (again, this is optional, depending on your preference)

Your Web Address (if you have one, and, again, this is optional)

The Text Information

The text portion of the imprint is where you describe some ideas about how you approach therapy, and it's a good place to list some of your specialty areas. You can have anything in this portion that you'd like. Some people put quotes or they talk about how their therapeutic approach is different from that of other therapists. The tone should be warm, professional, and inviting.

Here are a few suggestions for writing your imprint information –

- 1.) You should **avoid a lot of gray text** (that is, lines of text in a small font that are just too difficult to read. Realize that most subscribers these days are used to skimming text [blame the internet for this]). Effective advertising uses a lot of **white space** (where there are no words – because white space draws the eye to the words, which, like good therapy interventions, have impact).
- 2.) Advertising should make good use of **bolds, bullets, and italics**, or even color.
- 3.) The words should be short and understandable.
- 4.) Potential clients usually aren't very interested in your academic background or where you got your degrees – unless you really think that this distinguishes you from other therapists (and this could well be the case).
- 5.) Most of all, and this is the most important point, **a good advertising piece should speak to how you can help the client**. Tell them your specialty areas (understanding that, for example, they may not know that they are depressed, but they do know that they are tearful, having negative thoughts, isolated, experiencing low energy, and that they sleep too much). Words like EMDR or EFT mean nothing to most clients – but they would be drawn to “I use the latest therapy techniques to help you.”
- 6.) **Write to the client, and eliminate any words that are not necessary.**

