

Do You have a Criteria for Referrals?

Written by Gay Wardle

Let's talk REFERRALS, sometimes it takes various stakeholders to support our clients with their skin health. I liken this approach to the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child" – I believe that in some cases, it takes a village to support our clients. The effective identification of a skin disorder can achieve outstanding results for our clients, and this is sometimes achieved with specialists coming together to share their expert knowledge in order to diagnose a skin disorder and establish a treatment program.

In our industry, we know that you can change people's lives when you help them to overcome severe skin disorders. The types of skin disorders we can treat include prevention of scar tissue formation, pigmentation, vascular changes – all of which, when treated effectively, can contribute to a rise in self-esteem which leads to a positive mindset and good mental health.

Strong self-esteem, a positive mindset and good mental health – that is the space we want our clients to be living in. This in itself drives my passion for this industry – supporting others to feel great! It is for this reason, that we must look to experts who can support our industry when these results cannot be achieved alone in the clinic environment. So - who do we turn to and how do we do it?

Known stakeholders that can support clinic treatment programs include doctors, dieticians, naturopaths, dermatologists, psychologists, and dentists, to name a few. I have had success with clinic treatment programs that have been supported by doctors who have expert knowledge with treating hormonal issues.

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Clients have achieved their desired results with the collaborative approach of their Dermal Clinician and their Doctor. This stakeholder approach also helps us to grow our own knowledge as we learn from those who work in collaboration with our industry – and they learn from our expert knowledge regarding the treatment of skin conditions.

So how do you make the decision to refer, and what criteria do you follow?

My advice is to work through the following *Seven Step Process*:

Identify that your client/patient requires intervention with an expert stakeholder. Which expert stakeholder can you collaborate with to support your client's skin health?

1. Discuss this referral with your client and seek their permission.
2. Establish confidentiality for your client.
3. Peruse your data base of professional, expert stakeholders that can support your client in collaboration with the clinic program.
4. Provide your client/patient with information regarding the person or organization you are referring them to.
5. Write a referral letter.
6. Establish future appointments to see the client/patient once they have worked with the expert stakeholder that your referral was made to. Where possible, make contact with the person that you have referred your client to discuss their diagnosis and their recommendations. It is also important that you share your expert knowledge with the person that you have engaged through this referral process.

Writing the referral letter:

Ensure that your referral letter is clear and concise. Address the letter to the person you want your client/patient to see. The letter should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion and it should be formatted on a letterhead. This presentation adds to the professionalism of your salon/clinic.

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It is important that you ask for feedback in your letter so that you can follow-up on the recommendations through your treatment plan.

Please see below for an example letter:

Dear

Thank you for seeing Jane Wright.

I have been treating Jane's skin for rosacea and have made great progress. I have noticed an unidentifiable lesion appear on Jane's forehead. The lesion can be very itchy at times and flakey.

Could you please advise myself and Jane as to the appropriate treatment plan with this lesion. Any recommendations that you advise can be followed-up on in our clinic.

Thank you for your conclusion, I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Gay

When we refer a client to an external stakeholder, we are providing them with another layer of support. These are our clients, and we must follow-up and follow through. Act on any recommendations and ensure that the client stays committed to your clinic's treatment plan.

Let's work together to ensure that our clients are receiving the best treatment possible for their skin health.

Healthy Skin = strong self-esteem, positive mindset, and good mental health!

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