



2019 Business Trends Report

The State of Private Practice in
Canadian Mental Health



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New this year

In December 2018, Owl Practice reviewed practice trends from thousands of clinics to launch our first ever Business Trends Report.

This year, the report identifies key trends in the 2018 data and examines how the mental health industry has evolved in 2019.

This report seeks to identify trends in the private mental health industry in order to provide industry members with an in-depth understanding of their peers, and to offer clear advice on how to solve common problems practices may face.



Introduction

How do practitioners spend their time?

At Owl Practice, we're big believers in using data to inform business decisions. The *Business Trends Report* uses aggregated and anonymized data from thousands of mental health professionals. By utilizing usage data, we are able to identify industry trends that would otherwise be unavailable to private practitioners.

We've worked with thousands of Canadian practitioners to improve their business practices, enabling them to grow their client lists and revenue. Now, we want to bring all of that expertise to you.

This report analyzes 2019 trends for Canadian practitioners in the mental health industry. By understanding where you spend your time, you can identify business practices that can be made more efficient.



Your Partner in Private Practice

Behind Owl is a team of psychologists, therapists, engineers, designers, technologists and business managers who believe there is a better way to be in private practice. Everything we've learned about how to run a successful practice is built into the core of Owl so any clinician anywhere can leverage Owl's world-class platform.

Learn more about Owl Practice by visiting www.owlpractice.ca

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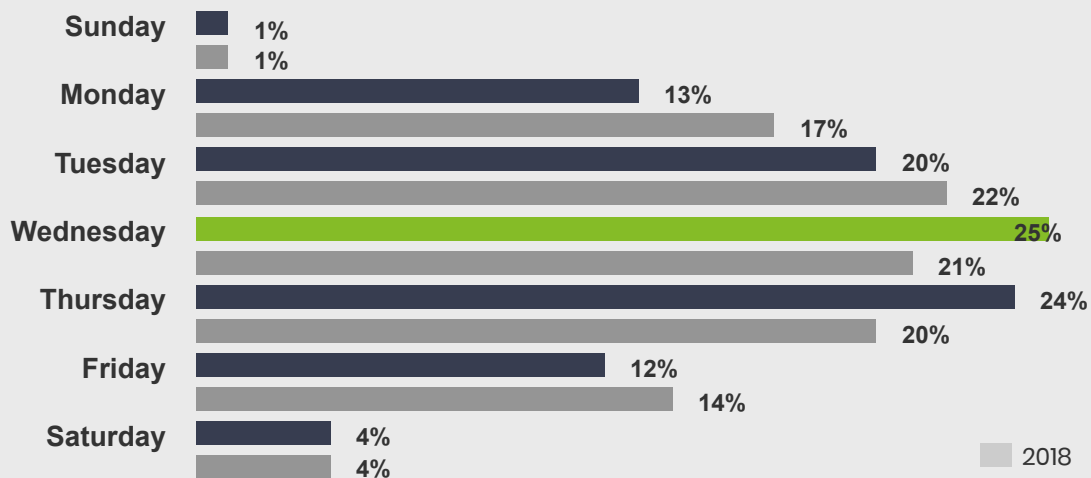
Session Trends

Clients are the heart of the practice

The driving force for all mental health care providers is improving the lives of their clients. To offer the best support possible, this often means that practitioners work outside of traditional business hours in order to accommodate their clients' schedules.

The data in the next few pages analyzes session trends. When do client sessions occur and what can we learn from that?

Daily Client Session Trends



In contrast to our findings in 2018, the busiest days of the week are **Wednesday (25%)** and **Thursday (24%)** for 2019. With nearly 50% of sessions happening on two days of the week, effective business practices on these days can help quicken client turnover between sessions and reduce administrative burnout.

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Session Duration

How long are typical client sessions?

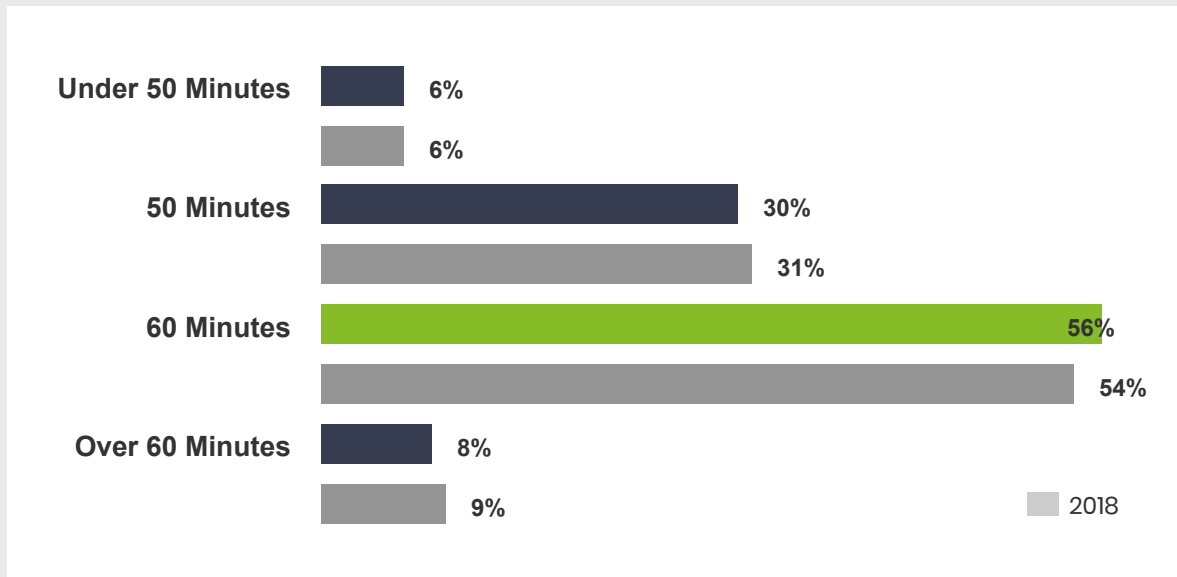
What length of session works best for your clients?

The length of a session varies on the type of therapy and the client base, but understanding industry trends helps practices ensure that their session length is competitive.

Over 50% of sessions are 60 minutes long, making the standard "hour" the most popular session duration. The one hour session has become even more popular in 2019 (**56%**) compared to 2018 (**54%**).



Session Duration Averages



Work exists beyond the session. The client needs to book their session by calling the practice, reminders need to be sent as the appointment gets closer. After the session, it takes time to schedule a follow-up appointment, bill the client and update session notes. Owl Practice automates many of these actions by improving workflows, optimizing work days, and helping practitioners schedule more sessions.

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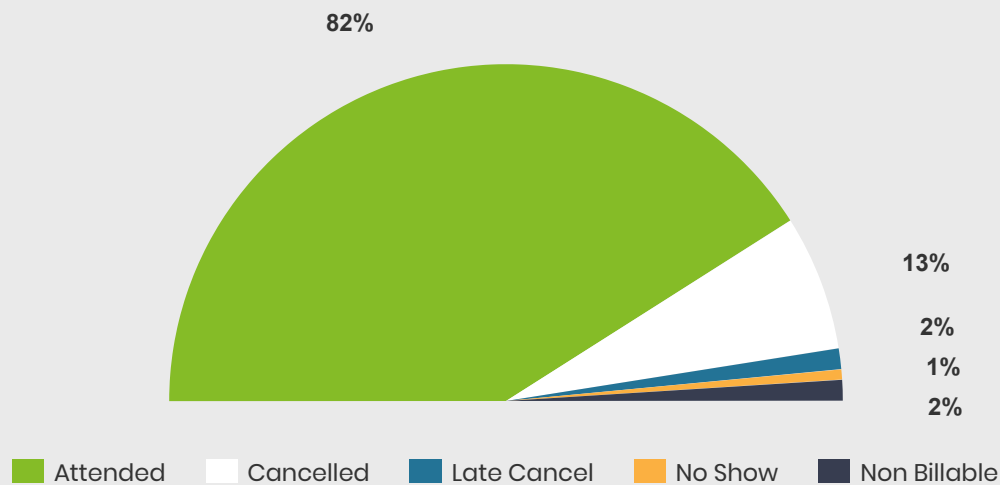
Attendance

The first step is showing up

A session is the modular block of time a practitioner spends with a client. The first step in a successful session is ensuring the client attends the session. Missed or cancelled sessions can affect client progress and negatively impact practice revenue.

82% of sessions are marked as attended. The remaining 18% are cancelled, missed, late cancelled, or non-billable. Practices seeking to improve their attendance rates can implement specific client notification strategies and clear cancellation policies.

Session Attendance Rate



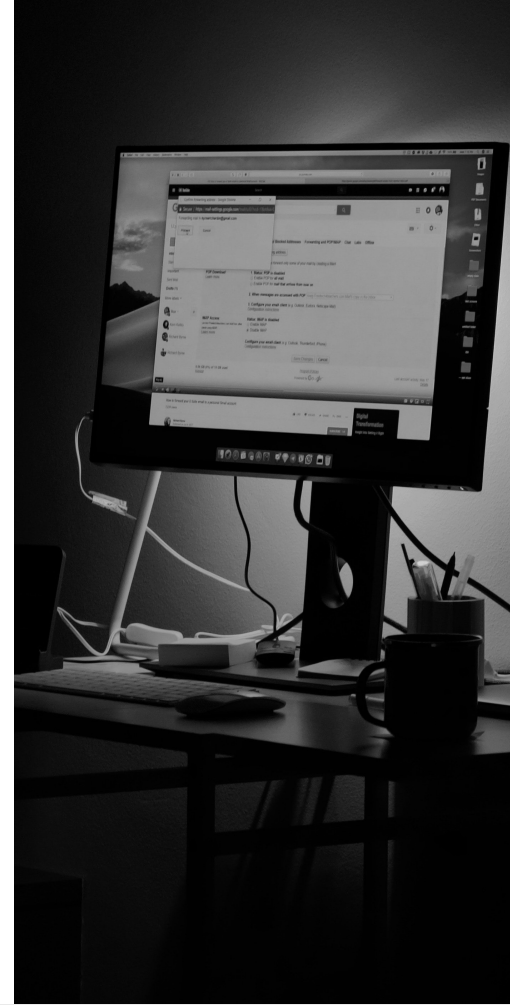
Appointment confirmations and reminders can drastically improve attendance rates. Automating this process by using a tool which delivers emails or text messages to clients for all sessions not only saves administrative time, it also improves revenue as more sessions are attended. Use Owl Practice's automatic appointment reminders and confirmations tools to streamline this task.

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Beyond the 9-5

The reality of working evenings and weekends for Canadian therapists

Many practices offer appointment times outside of the traditional 9-5 to best accommodate their clients. For practitioners, this can mean longer working days and a fluctuating schedule. Improving the administrative workflows for these sessions helps practitioners focus on their client, and not how late they'll be in the office completing paperwork.



Sessions on Evenings and Weekends

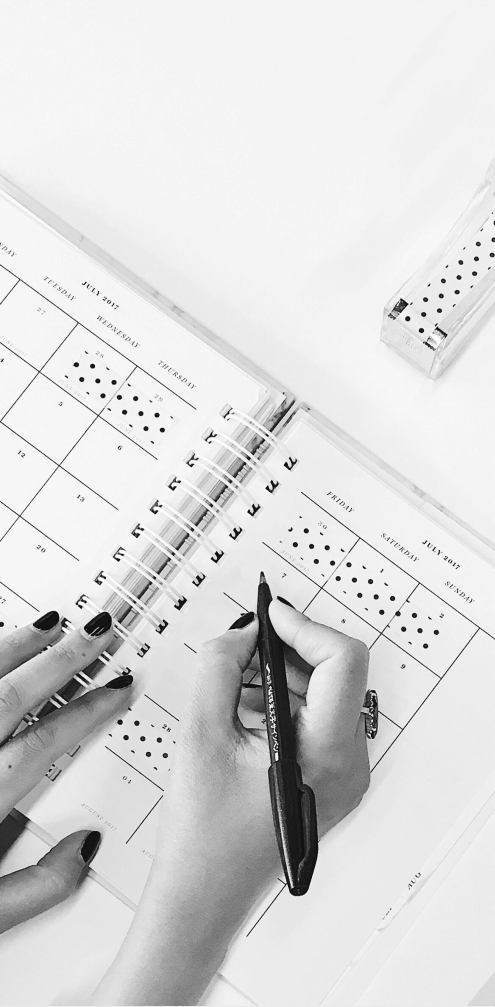


5% of practitioners
see clients on weekends



20% of practitioners
see clients after 5 p.m.





Sessions Per Month

The average practitioner has 49 client sessions each month

This number is an average of part time and full time practitioners, and offers a general insight into the volume of sessions. The length of sessions may vary, and it does not include non-billable clinical hours.

This is a **20% increase compared to 2018** where the average practitioner has only 41 client sessions each month.

Strategies to Increase Client Sessions

Streamline Scheduling



- Implement Online Booking so clients can schedule their own sessions
- Automate reminders to reduce missed or cancelled appointments
- Use a tool designed for couples or family scheduling

Simple Client Billing



- Standardize invoices and receipts
- Integrate payment processing into your billing workflow (Owl pairs with Stripe)
- Use the Workflow tool to manage outstanding balances

Improve Note Writing




- Use a web-based tool to write your notes from any computer
- Develop templates to standardize your notes
- Store your notes digitally in a PHIPA compliant tool to access them on the go

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Billing

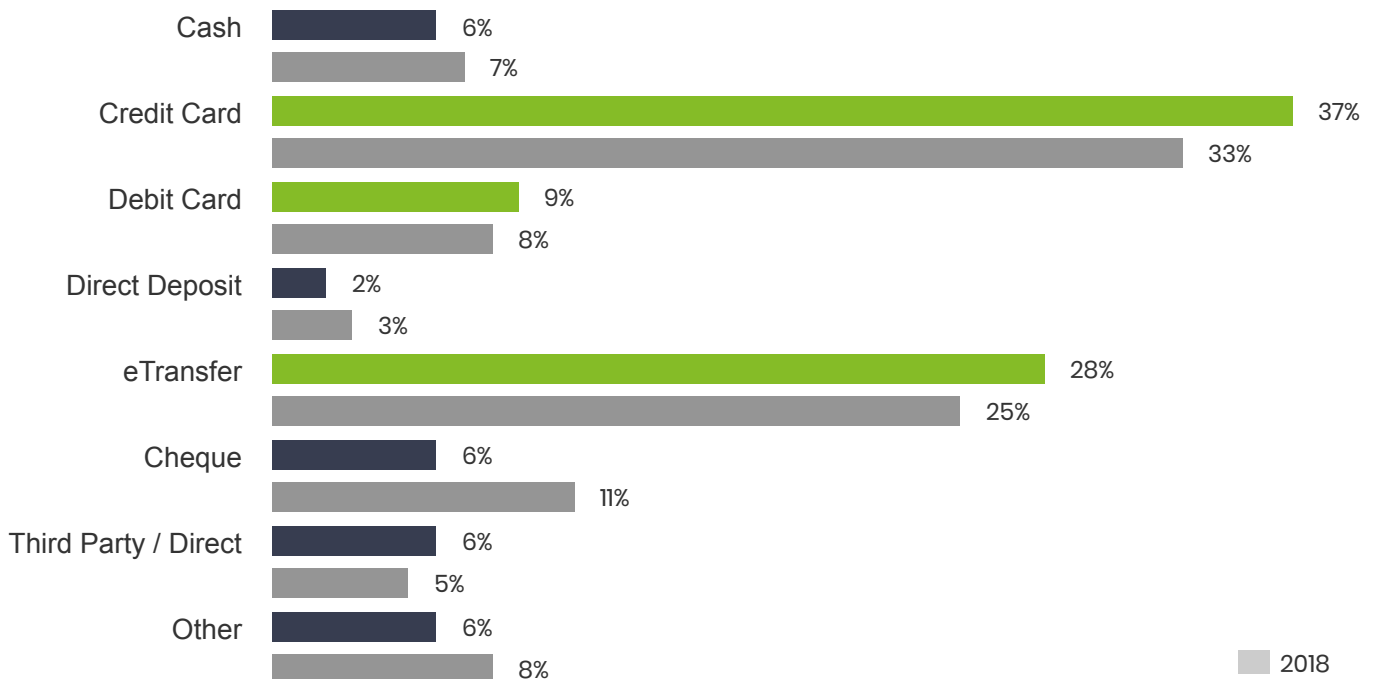
Does your billing measure up?

Practice owners hold the added responsibility of managing all financial details and accounting for their practitioners. Although some work with bookkeepers to manage this, many manage their books individually. 

Staying up to date on industry trends is important for offering competitive rates and processes to clients, meeting growth targets, and scaling your business.



Popular Client Payment Methods



Similar to 2018, credit cards are the most popular method for clients to pay for sessions in 2019. To optimize this revenue source, practices should choose a credit card processor with competitive rates and integration with other billing tools.

Client Discounts

Sliding fees are standard across the industry

The nature of mental health care often results in practices having a flexible fee scale. This is often necessary for low income clients, students, or as a practitioner's rates increase.

Regardless of the "why," this data reflects that a significant volume of sessions are discounted. Automating discounts prevents fee errors, confusion for clients, and the potential for lost revenue.

Discounted Sessions



● No discount ● Discount

13% of sessions are discounted, regardless of the type of therapy. Developing a process to anticipate and manage these discounts facilitates accurate session rates.

Owl Practice has a built in [Service Discounts](#) tool to automate all sliding fee scale discounts and reduce billing mishaps.

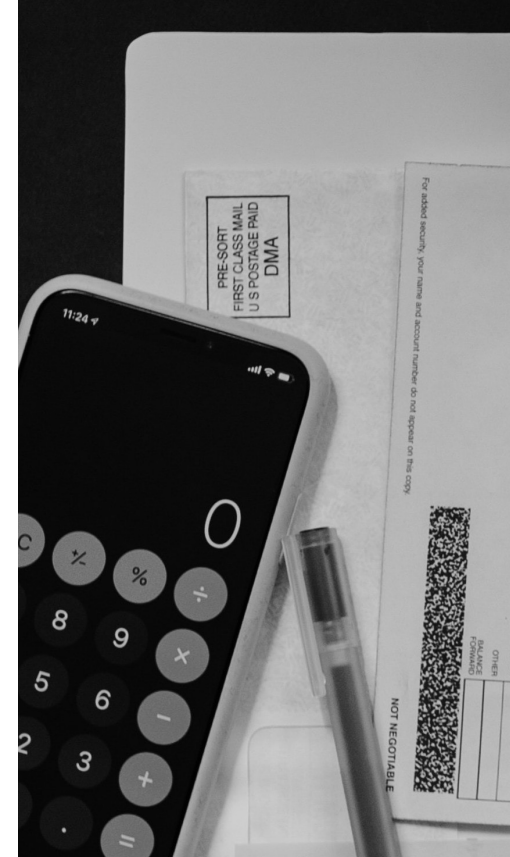
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Payment Times

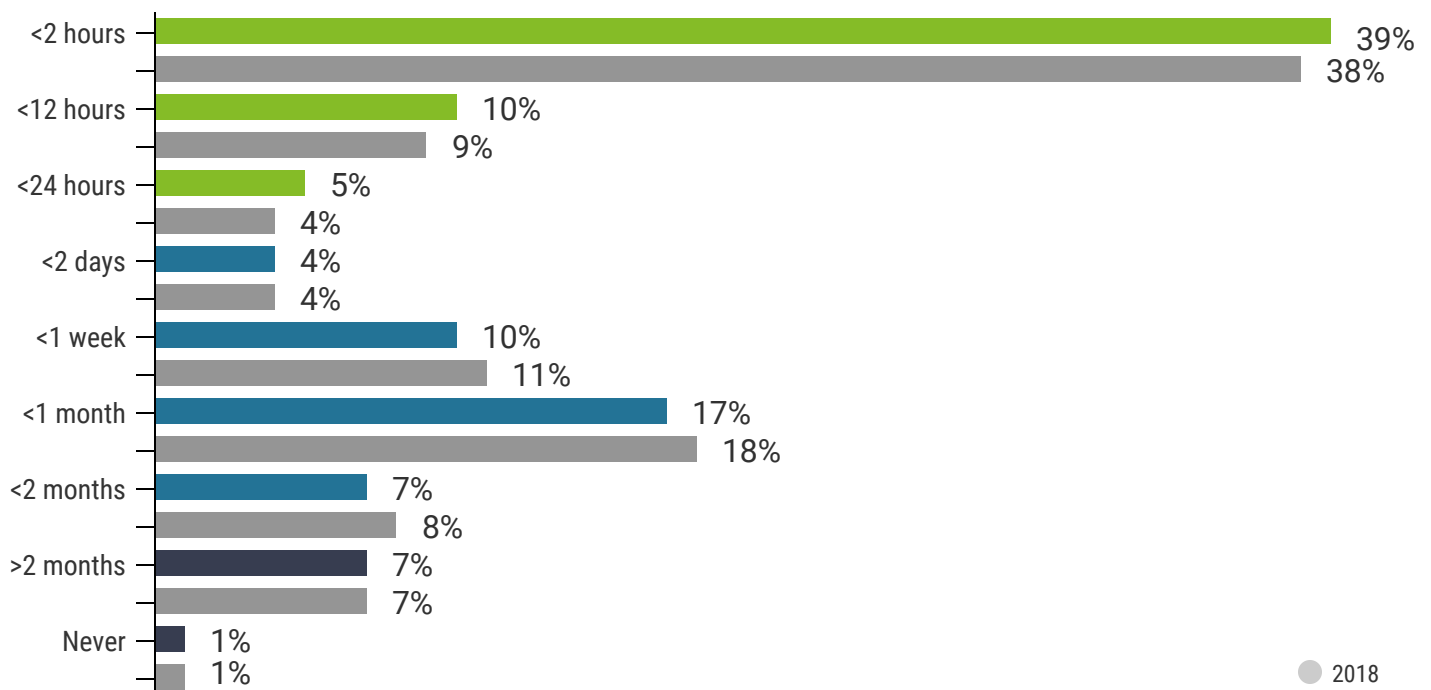
Clients do not always pay immediately after sessions

Receiving and recording payment from clients is the final step in the billing process. Our data reveals that there is a high volume of sessions which are not paid for immediately.

Practices must create an easy to use and accurate process to manage their outstanding balances.



Payment Timing After Sessions



This graph shows that **the majority of sessions are not paid for immediately at the end of sessions**. Practices should have an accurate and easy way of managing and tracking outstanding balances and Account Receivables. Owl Practice's billing Workflow tools, client specific tracking, and accounting data exports facilitate a highly accurate billing strategy so no outstanding balance is missed.

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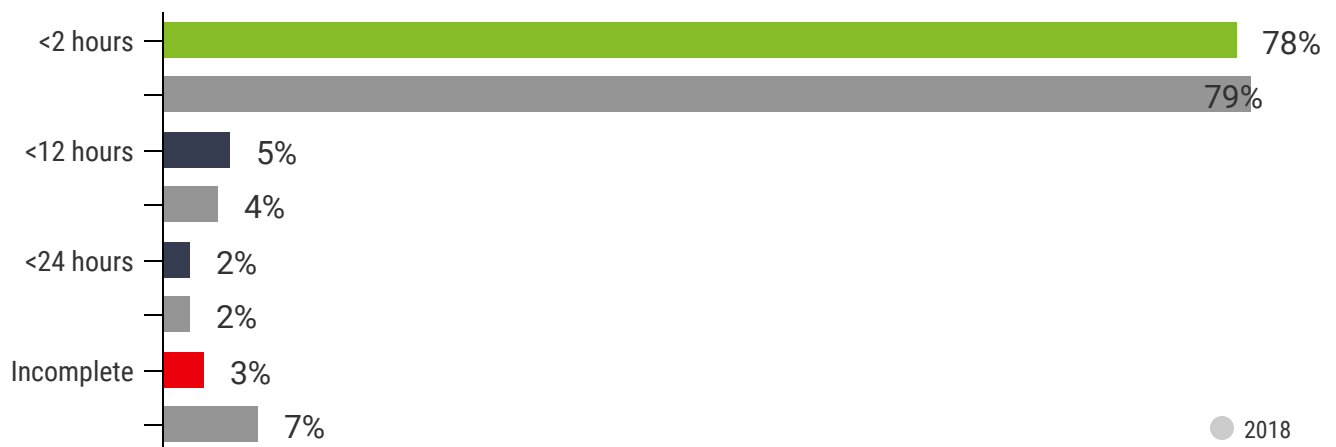
Clinical Notes

Accurate notes are the easiest way to document client progress

Clinicians are already familiar with writing and signing accurate session notes. These notes are not only used to document what happened in session, they often inform treatment plans and upcoming sessions.

Signing a note is a practitioner's last step. This data examines the length of time between opening and signing a note, and how long it takes to complete notes on average.

Time Until Clinical Notes Are Signed



78% of notes are signed within two hours of starting the note, showing that the majority of notes are completed right away.

Writing and signing notes soon after the session increases their accuracy. Using Owl Practice's integrated Session Notes tool improves the speed at which notes are completed as practitioners are able to focus on writing notes instead of completing other administrative tasks.

Supervision

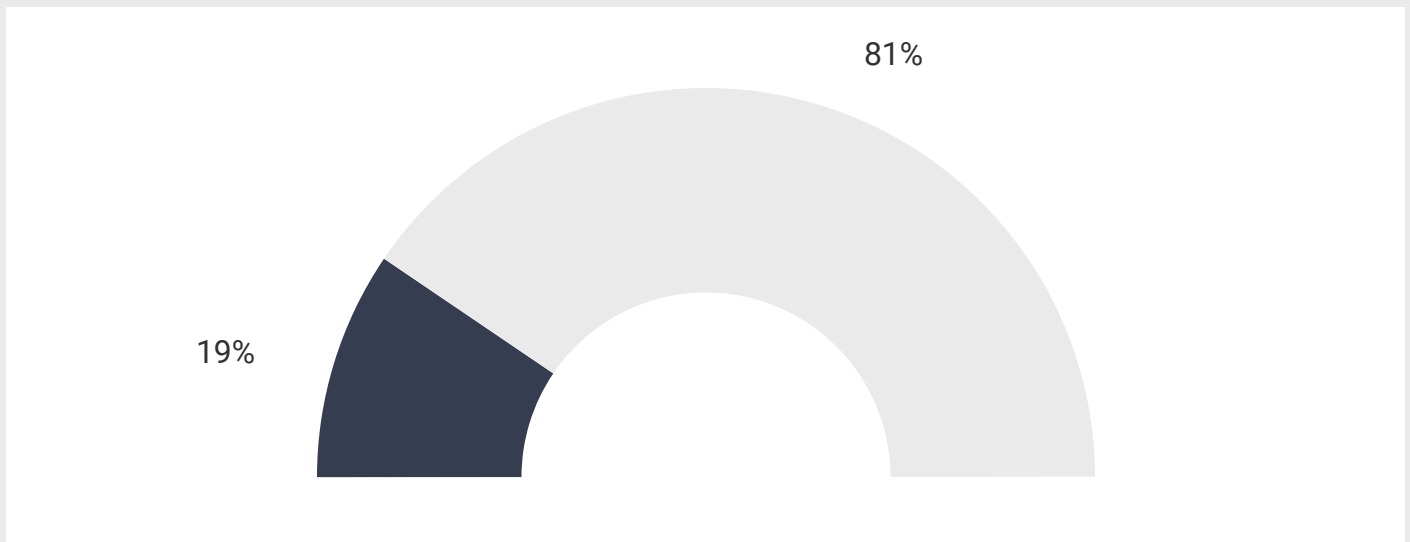
Supervision trains better therapists

Supervision is a key element in the training of new practitioners, and looks different for various industries.

19% of sessions are supervised, so practitioners are best served by tracking these accurately.



Supervised Sessions



Owl Practice has tools designed for the specific needs of supervision in the mental health field. Notes can be reviewed, supervisors can be included on relevant financial documents, and multiple supervisors can be assigned.



Conclusions

We hope you found the industry insights in this report useful in helping you improve your practice administration.

Owl Practice is a practice management tool designed to streamline business administration for private practice owners in Canada, and to help practices operate compliantly in the digital space. Owl users include social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists, clinical counsellors, speech and language pathologists, life coaches, students, and more.

We'd love to show you exactly how Owl can help you improve your billing, your notes, your scheduling, and more.

Contact us today to get started, and practice wisely.

www.owlpractice.ca

Optimize your practice management strategies with Owl Practice



- ✓ Contact us for a free consultation
- ✓ Start a fourteen day free trial
- ✓ Attend a live demo and discover exactly how Owl will improve your practice