

Paperless Private Practice for the IBCLC

A Complete Guide to Maximizing Technology
for Efficiency, Productivity, and HIPAA Compliance

by Annie Frisbie
IBCLC MA



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ENVISIONING YOUR PRIVATE PRACTICE

Before you choose your devices, configure your services, and start scanning and shredding, take a few moments to think about why you are drawn to a paperless private practice. It may be a lack of storage space, or a desire to be more eco-friendly, or concern that you are in breach of HIPAA because you don't totally understand how all these technologies work. You may just be curious about all the different EHR platforms you are hearing about on Facebook.

These are all great reasons to give paperless a try. However, I would say that the number one reason to go paperless is this:

It will make your job easier.

This is not an exaggeration. Technology, by its very definition, is “the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes.” Instead of a desk covered in papers, you have a system that puts everything in its right place. Instead of handing a folder to your client (where it will promptly get lost amid all the folders that the hospital sends home), you open a virtual door to a relationship. Instead of keeping track of things, you are keeping your focus where it belongs: on the family.

In private practice, you're not just self-employed, you're also in business for yourself, and that makes you an entrepreneur. This requires a very different mindset than in a traditional work environment, where you are hired to do a job for a certain salary. When you do your job well, you could get a raise. If you do your job poorly, you can get fired. Your compensation is directly tied to how others view the quality of the work you are doing.

When you are an entrepreneur, you are both employee and boss. You define success, and you evaluate whether your performance is good enough. You can be a slacker boss and a slacker employee, or you can be an impossible-to-please taskmaster and an employee who will work to the point of

exhaustion. A good private practice strikes a balance with realistic goals and performance expectations that leave space for a personal life.

Implementing the appropriate technology and using it to its fullest capabilities creates the space you need to be the best IBCLC you can be. You will work more efficiently, make more money, and eliminate the tasks and practice that can lead to burnout.