

# Shared Office Space vs. Full-Time Lease: What Makes Sense for Therapists

By OSI Offices | March 29, 2026 | 5 min read

If you're building a therapy practice in Washington DC, one of the most financially significant decisions you'll face early on is your office arrangement. Should you commit to a full-time lease and have your own dedicated space — or does a **shared office space** model make more sense for where your practice stands today? For many therapists, this isn't just a cost question. It's a question of timing, clinical flexibility, and long-term strategy.

The good news: there's no single right answer. But understanding the real tradeoffs between shared office arrangements and full-time leases can save you thousands of dollars — and a great deal of unnecessary stress — before you ever see your first client in that space.

# The True Cost of a Full-Time Therapy Office Lease in DC

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Washington DC's commercial real estate market is among the most expensive in the country. A private therapy office in a professional building — the kind that instills client confidence and satisfies insurance credentialing requirements — can easily run \$2,000 to \$5,000 or more per month, depending on the neighborhood and building.

That's the base rent. The real number climbs quickly once you factor in:

- **Security deposits** — often one to three months' rent required upfront
- **Utilities** — electricity, high-speed internet, and sometimes HVAC charges passed through by the landlord
- **Furniture and setup** — therapy rooms require a specific feel; bare walls and generic seating won't do
- **Cleaning and maintenance** — your responsibility as the leaseholder
- **Long-term commitment** — most DC commercial leases run one to three years, with financial penalties for early exit

For a therapist who is just launching a private practice, transitioning from a group setting, or maintaining a part-time caseload, signing a multi-year lease before your practice is fully established carries real financial risk. Many therapists have found themselves locked into lease obligations during periods of reduced client load — a stressful position that adds financial pressure to work that depends on clarity and presence.

# What Shared Office Space Actually Provides for Therapists

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A **therapist office rental** arranged through a shared or hourly model works differently. Instead of paying for a space whether or not you use it, you pay for the hours your clients are actually sitting across from you. At OSI Offices, on-demand therapy rooms are available at \$14 per hour — bookable in advance through an online client portal. (Pricing is subject to change; see [osioffices.com/pricing](https://osioffices.com/pricing) for current rates.)

This model offers therapists several meaningful advantages:

- **Cost aligned with revenue.** You pay when you see clients — not when you're between sessions, on vacation, or still building your caseload.
- **Professional environment without the overhead.** A reputable shared office provider delivers reception services, welcoming waiting areas, and well-appointed rooms that signal professionalism to clients and insurance credentialing reviewers alike.
- **Flexibility for growth and contraction.** As your practice grows, book more hours. As your caseload shifts, scale back — without penalty or paperwork.
- **No long-term commitments or hidden fees.** OSI Offices has never charged security deposits, setup fees, or termination penalties — and that policy hasn't changed in 45 years of operation.

For therapists who are [starting or growing a private practice](#), maintaining a part-time caseload, or still establishing their client base,

the shared model typically offers far better financial footing than a traditional lease.

## **When a Full-Time Dedicated Office Makes Sense**

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A full-time office — whether leased directly or through a business center's dedicated office program — becomes the right call when your caseload justifies the monthly commitment. If you're seeing clients four to five days per week on a near-full schedule, the per-hour cost of on-demand booking can begin to approach what a flat monthly rate for a dedicated space would cost. At that volume, a dedicated office may actually deliver better value — plus the consistency of a space that is reliably, exclusively yours.

A dedicated office also makes sense when:

- You want to personalize the space — specific furniture, art, or therapeutic objects that reflect your practice's identity and approach
- Your clinical work requires a room that is reserved for you alone, with no risk of scheduling conflicts or last-minute unavailability
- You need consistent access during extended hours, including early mornings, evenings, or weekend sessions

At OSI Offices, dedicated private offices are available alongside hourly and shared plans — with the same no-deposit, no-hidden-fees approach that applies across all plan types. That continuity makes it easy to move from one arrangement to another as your practice evolves.

# The Path Most Therapists Actually Take

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In practice, many successful therapists in Washington DC don't make a permanent either/or decision. They move through a natural progression: starting with hourly office use while building their caseload, transitioning to a standing reservation or shared plan as client volume stabilizes, and eventually moving into a dedicated office when the practice is thriving and the economics clearly support it.

One longtime OSI client, Dr. Diane Kern, described this path directly:

*"OSI has been instrumental in building my psychology practice for nearly 10 years. I started with hourly office use; graduated to a shared office space; and for the past few years have my own private full-time office. The quality and array of services along with the flexibility of plans are invaluable."*

— **Diane Kern, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist**

This kind of progression is only possible when your office provider genuinely supports multiple plan types — and when there's no penalty for changing your arrangement as your practice grows into itself.

## Five Questions to Ask Before You Decide

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Before committing to any arrangement — a lease, a shared plan, or something in between — work through these questions honestly:

**1. How many client hours are you currently billing per week?**

Under 15 hours, a shared or hourly model almost always comes out

ahead financially. Over 30 consistent hours, a dedicated office may offer better value.

2. **Are you credentialed on insurance panels — or planning to be?** A professional business address at a recognized building typically satisfies panel requirements, even in a shared arrangement. OSI's K Street NW address has served this purpose for therapists for decades.
3. **Do you need evening or weekend access?** OSI Offices is open until 9PM on weekdays and 6PM on Saturdays, with Sunday access available for clients in good standing — coverage that many commercial landlords don't offer.
4. **Could your practice situation change in the next year?** If you're considering a new full-time position, a potential move, or uncertainty about client volume, flexibility has real financial value. Don't sign away that flexibility for a marginal cost difference.
5. **What experience do you want your clients to have when they arrive?** A calm, professional, confidential waiting area matters — and that's not exclusive to therapists who hold a full-time lease. The shared model, done right, is indistinguishable from the client's perspective.

## What to Look for in a Shared Therapy Office

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If the **part-time therapy office** route makes sense for your practice right now, not all shared spaces are created equal. For mental health professionals in particular, look closely at:

- **Acoustic privacy.** Sessions are confidential. Walls that carry sound compromise the therapeutic environment and raise legitimate HIPAA concerns. Verify before you book.

- **A welcoming waiting area.** Clients arrive before you do. The quality of the waiting experience shapes the session before it begins — a calming space with thoughtful design makes a difference.
- **Proximity to transit.** DC clients depend on Metro. OSI Offices is steps from Farragut North on the Red Line, making it easily accessible from across the city and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs.
- **Reliable booking technology.** The ability to reserve your room in advance, view your own schedule clearly, and receive automated reminders is essential for clinical predictability. OSI's proprietary portal handles all of this.
- **A professional address that supports credentialing.** A K Street NW address signals professional legitimacy to insurance panels, referral sources, and prospective clients — regardless of your plan type.

OSI Offices has served more than 150 mental health professionals in Washington DC — therapists, psychologists, counselors, and coaches. That community has developed organically over decades, with many clients referring to one another and building their practices from the same address.

## Shared Office Space vs. Full-Time Lease: The Bottom Line

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The decision between a **shared office space** arrangement and a full-time lease doesn't have to be permanent — and it shouldn't feel like a gamble. For most therapists starting out or managing a part-time caseload, the hourly and shared model is the financially sound, professionally appropriate choice. For established practices with

consistently full schedules, a dedicated office provides the stability and personalization that a thriving practice deserves.

The most important thing is working with a provider who supports you at every stage of that journey — without locking you into a plan that no longer fits when your practice changes course.

## **Find the Right Office Plan for Your Therapy Practice**

From \$14/hour on-demand rooms to dedicated private offices, OSI Offices has flexible plans built specifically for mental health professionals. No deposits, no hidden fees, no long-term commitments — just a professional K Street address and a community of 150+ therapists.

[\*\*Explore MHP Plans\*\*](#)

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