

ARE YOU BECOMING A DOCTOR OF YOUR PROFESSION? Good business habits or stepping over the line...

by Susan Preston

The first question I ask every time we get a claim from a permanent cosmetic technician, is "What type of medication(s) was your client on?" Invariably the reply is something like "hormone pills", "some type of anti-depressant" or "multiple medications." I would guess this is true in about 75% of our claims.

The good old days for tattooers and body piercers were when it was clear someone was either drunk or stoned. The shop could then decide if they didn't really care since the person desiring the service had more issues than their new tattoo or body piercing, or the shop would simply turn the client down if they were obviously out of control.

Many shops now have on their consent form "I confirm I am not under the influence at this time" and often turn clients away who are clearly drunk or on something.

Now both permanent cosmetic and body art professionals are having a more difficult time deciding if they should turn down someone who is medicated, without being doctors. This isn't easy. Where is the line?

I asked a very knowledgeable, well-known permanent cosmetic professional to write an article for this very subject. After much research, she came to the conclusion that if she turned down all clients on medication, she would be out of business: True, I am sure! Also, she felt that trying to "diagnose" what medication someone takes is to practice medicine without a license.

Yet, 75% of our claims in 2006 were due to problem clients, not bad procedures. The question then becomes "How do you tell who are going to be troublesome?" By being able to determine which client might become a future problem, the informed professional can determine if they want to have them as a client or not. The consultation process and completing the medical history form is the time to decide if a person should or should not become a client.

To have a successful permanent cosmetic procedure, body piercing or tattoo, the professional needs to feel quite confident they can make the client happy. If there is a feeling that this person cannot be pleased; that is the time to turn that prospect down. There is nothing more miserable than having someone hound you after a procedure or even worse, suing you. Spending time with lawyers, even your own, is dealing with negative energy: life is too short.

Here are a list of clues that a person may not be a good candidate for the service you offer:

- They don't listen to your ideas or consider you an expert.
- They want to tell you how to run your procedure on them.
- They are fidgety and restless when you start to work on them.
- They are going through a bad time in life such as loss of a spouse, loved one or divorce.

- They are out of work, not by their choice. If they are paying a lot of money for the service they are getting, it is surprising how often we see “buyer's remorse” as a way to get their money back.
- They are on mood altering or anti-depression medication. If they are consistently depressed it can mean they are not happy about life in general. Then it is a good idea to consider if this is the best advertisement for the work you are planning on doing on them and if they will speak well about you and your business.
- They are on multiple medications. Even doctors may not know how prescription medications interact with each other, so how can you possibly know? We have had more than one claim from people on multiple medications especially if one of them is a hormone or anti-depressant. If this is the case and you are concerned about working on the client, send them to their doctor for a written release before you work on them or simply turn them down.

No way does this mean that clients with any of the above situations are automatic declines! These are clues to what is going on in your client's life. It is up to each professional to decide if you can satisfy the client with the service they are requesting. If not, tell them to come back at a later date, have them get a written release from their doctor or send them off to a competitor. Try to become a bit of a “psychic” during the consultation process, not a doctor. **And trust that inner voice if it tells you to turn the client down.**