

GYCP Ep 148 - Looking Into the Benefits of Locums: For New Graduates, Practitioners

[INTRO MUSIC]

This is the Grow Your Clinic Podcast from Clinic Mastery. We help progressive health professionals to lead inspired teams, transform client experiences, and build clinics for good. Now, it's time to grow your clinic!

JACK O'BRIEN: Well, welcome back to another episode of the Grow Your Clinic Podcast. My name is Jack O'Brien, your host, and we are really ramping up as we are heading into the Christmas season of recording. I have another guest to join us on the podcast. I have Jack Williams. It's Jack, who we have today. Jack Williams from the [HealthLink'd Podcast](#). Jack, welcome to the podcast. How are you?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! Thanks very much! I'm well! Thanks, Jack. It's good to meet a fellow Jack because, I know... yeah it's becoming a very popular name, especially, amongst the younger ones. I'm sure you've noticed that.

JACK O'BRIEN: Absolutely! Tell me, is Jack short for Jhon or Jackson or you're straight Jack?

JACK WILLIAMS: No. Yeah, it's the same on the birth certificate. How about you?

JACK O'BRIEN: It is actually and it's a running joke. Well, my middle name is Daniel. And no, my father wasn't an alcoholic, but he is partial to a whiskey on a Friday night and so it's Jack Daniel for me.

There you go. But, enough about me. For context listeners, Jack has the [HealthLink'd Podcast](#) which we will link up in the show notes over at [clinicmastery.com/podcast](#). All of the links and profiles, resources, notes will be over there, that's [clinicmastery.com/podcast](#). But so that we can get an insight into who you are Jack, we've got a couple of quick rapid-fire questions to open up this episode. Are you ready?

JACK WILLIAMS: All right! Let's do it.

JACK O'BRIEN: Okay. Number one: What are you reading or listening to right now?

JACK WILLIAMS: Right now, I'm reading "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. And I was revisiting some of the Clinic Mastery Podcasts which I've discovered with you guys in January and I've been listening alone. I've been really enjoying those.

JACK O'BRIEN: Awesome, mate! Very flattering. Thank you. You didn't have to say that. We didn't set that one up, listeners. That was just (inaudible), but we'll take it. Thank you, mate. Who inspires you?

JACK WILLIAMS: Generally, I'll have to give a shoutout to Adam Eakins and because I just attended whose shoulder course in Melbourne on the weekend just gone. Yeah, he really imparted a lot of very valuable clinical knowledge and improved the way I think about shoulders. And he is definitely a larger-than-life character and it definitely translates in the flesh, like it's not really, it's not a... it's not a persona, it's not a brand. That's - Adam Eakins is like that in real life.

JACK O'BRIEN: I love it. For those who are unfamiliar, Adam Eakins is out from UK, a physiotherapist, who is quite controversial across the social medias, and well, let's not say controversial, say, a provocative and enjoys a robust discussion. That's for sure. Worth checking out, absolutely. He is a bit of an influencer. Okay. Thanks for sharing, mate.

Tell me, what did you want to be growing up?

JACK WILLIAMS: Oh! It's a good question. I've stumbled across my year six and they just you know, they get you to draw a picture and write out what you wanted to do. And I said firefighter at the time and I looked back and found a year to two mean I said Park Ranger. Sorry. So yeah, I've kind of mixed it up across the board. *inaudible*

JACK O'BRIEN: You'd get plenty work up here in New South Wales with the bush fires at the moment if you were still donning the red and yellows.

JACK WILLIAMS: Absolutely! And as part of being a physio, because I did physio post-grad so a bit later in life, at the time, I thought all physiotherapists worked in sports and worked outside. So that was kind of on the attractions of doing that.

JACK O'BRIEN: Gotcha! Now, you find yourself stuck in four white walls or the corridors (inaudible).

JACK WILLIAMS: Naaaah! Pretty much.

JACK O'BRIEN: It's good. And finally Jack, what's a motto that you like to live by?

JACK WILLIAMS: Oh! Okay. I guess, "Big things have small beginnings." It would be my favorite. Yep.

JACK O'BRIEN: I love it! Reminds me of Tristan White from the Physio Co., uhm, Think Big, Act Small.

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah.

JACK O'BRIEN: Awesome. Cool, mate. Well, thank you for sharing those rapid-fire questions. Let's get a little bit of your backstory. And listeners, just for some context, Jack's gonna have

some really interesting insights on burnout in the health profession and in the health industry specifically, around physio, the benefits of locuming, and resilience, those types of things.

So, Jack, you're a physio now, but you mentioned that it was post-grad, can you furnish the back story of what's got you through to where you are now?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah, sure! So, do you mean in terms of doing physiotherapy? Or just...

JACK O'BRIEN: Yeah! What you studied and how you've ended up in private practice?

JACK WILLIAMS: So, I ... I start - so when I finished year 12, I read a Richard Dawkins book, [The Selfish Gene](#). I was really taken with that and so able to just study molecular biology and neuroscience at university (inaudible) in Canberra. Yeah, just because out of general interest in science at the time. So, I went through that degree and did a little bit of bench research, after doing an honest year at the Australian National University. Yeah and I found that really interesting but, I just had that desire to work outside which should have stuck with me since a kid. I was - and you know, I love AFL footballs and everyone sees the AFL physios on the sidelines, you know, running water, doing massages, taping hot stuff. And I was like, "that looks like a really awesome job, I want to do that." And so, I signed up for physio.

(Inaudible)

JACK O'BRIEN: Oh! That's funny. Okay. So, that is why to be on the on the boundary of the MCG is there's a Luigi to physio but, I'm sure you don't find yourself there now. What happens?

JACK WILLIAMS: Well, that's it. I mean it looks good on television, doesn't it? It looks like (inaudible). And I've actually, I did some volunteer work for free or for Fremantle Football Club when they played in Canberra for a couple of rounds. So, I've had a taste of the kind of sports if they'll roll, you know, Tommy did some work in amongst the Club, and you know just... I think that's where my passion lies. In the end, I think I was really excited about physiotherapy because when I actually chose to study it, I wasn't sure if it would be challenging enough for me which I now think is absolutely ridiculous. And I think back and laugh at that every day.

JACK O'BRIEN: Yeah! That's awesome. Okay. And so, you've gone through and graduated physio and you're a couple of years that now. I think, as we were chatting (inaudible), it's a really unique perspective for those listening along, your eyes, your fresh eyes, and your perspective on how the health care industry as a whole. So, what has the physio looked like for you over the last couple of years?

JACK WILLIAMS: I think, it's - there's been a lot of trouble and I've also just in really exploring the job market that's available for a lot of Allied Health Professionals. I think, it's really amazing coming from the vendor science aspect where it works pretty hard to come by, and there's a lot of insecurity and then, you do something like physiotherapy and you can get a job in any state and territory in Australia very easily. So, it's been really great to explore that.

JACK O'BRIEN: How many - how many jobs have you had over the past two years?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! I've done five locums to date. So, my goal is to lurk them around Australia in every (sorry) in every state and territory of Australia. And I've done work in site on the Gold Coast, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, and Tasmania. So, it's just another three-state territories like to go.

JACK O'BRIEN: Awesome, mate! Exciting! So, any healthcare owners that are listening in might pick up charity there, but tell us why. So, I think your perspective is interesting because a lot of - there'd be a lot of clinic owners and health professionals, as well, who see, locuming perhaps, in a negative light but, I know you you've got a really deliberate strategy around it. So, can you tell us about what you think the benefits of locuming are for a health professional?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! Sure! I think, they're a great benefit particularly early on. I know this isn't... it's something I've been advised against by many of my peers, but I think it's really good. Just because of the huge work availability that's out there, I think. If you take a locum as a new graduate, then you get an opportunity to travel around and try out potentially different clinical areas that you haven't tried before. I think, it's - it... because a lot of people leave University with a really significant travel edge, and I think, if they commit to something like a private practice role where you really want to work somewhere for at least two years to get the most out of it. If they kind of go in half-hearted and wanting to travel before you make the commitment, you can have a lot of commitment problems later on. And I think it just causes friction.

JACK O'BRIEN: So, you were trying to get the commitment bug out of your system, or the trial bug out of your system early.

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's it. I mean yeah, I just haven't seen much of Australia and I just wanted to get around and check it all out I think - and locuming has been an amazing way to do that. And it's not something you're told about at university. I think, a lot of people aren't really familiar with the job market at all.

JACK O'BRIEN: Hmm. Interesting! Okay. So, I can certainly see that perspective of getting the travel out of your system, experiencing what the grass is like on the other side, and with the intention on, I'm assuming it, correct me if I'm wrong, if one day, settling down and having a family, kids, and all those things, knowing that you've already seen the other side, is that part of your mindset or framework?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah, definitely! And I think that's, yeah, that's definitely the goal, I think. I think it's definitely possible to keep traveling indefinitely. I think, you could find that really rewarding. But, for me it's I... I currently live in Melbourne, and I lived in Canberra and Sydney, just along the way. And I'm really interested in moving out into a regional or remote area. I think, just because there's a better quality of life, there's more leadership opportunities, and I think, being a health professional, you... you'll get more meaning out of your job if you service a

community... a community that really needs you or you can form stronger ties with. So, yeah, that's what I'm looking for.

JACK O'BRIEN: Yeah! It's also that's - that's a really good perspective. They tell me I know that um you're interested in the - the longevity or the burn outs when it comes to health professionals, how - how did you see that framework at the moment of health professionals and burning out?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! So, I mean obviously, I'm pretty I'm pretty new to the game and burnout is something that's not discussed at all. As you go through your training, my peers don't talk about it, my mentor rarely they talk about it. But obviously, I think it's... it's really prevalent, especially in physiotherapy which I'm told. I've looked around for some solid data on this, it's the most short-lived of all the Allied Health Professions.

JACK O'BRIEN: Right! There you go. And what's the, in your understanding, I think we're on similarly wavelength state, what's your understanding of the average lifespan a physio?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yes, it's tough to say. I think, it's... I mean, you hear lots of like around the five-year mark, lots of people stay (inaudible) in physio and I think, you know that's the one I hear the most. But, if you look at workforce reports, particularly around in Victoria, they're just the ones I could find recently I guess, it points to more seven... seven to ten years, but beyond that people do at some point leave the profession.

JACK O'BRIEN: Hmm. And in the same way, that's the same across other professions, right? Of speech, OT, and Psychology, etc?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! Yeah! Absolutely! I just find, yeah, my impression is from what I've hear, what I read, is that with physiotherapy, there's just we're just more at risk for whatever reason and, you know, I when I did physiotherapy, I want to get at least ten years out of it. So, it was a little bit surprising just to look around and see something. Well, also looking at some of the movements my peers have done throughout as they've left University, you see that there is quite a lot of movement no matter, you know, no matter what your intentions are going.

JACK O'BRIEN: So, how can you wear those tie together? Where do you think locuming plays a role in helping increase the life span of physios?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yes! So I think, it's just... um... getting me to that travel which really helps. So then, you know people can really commit into a role and they can really check off, you know, whatever jobs on offer and particularly around a geographic and a different clinical area. And I think, yeah, I mean in terms of preventing burn out, locums can also be a real value for people just to take it's maybe a working holiday and freshen up a bit, because there is there's a real opportunity (inaudible) clinical area whether it be in hospital aged care or private practice or another role, you can usually find one in, you know, a new and interesting area.

JACK O'BRIEN: Okay. I got a couple of threads on a pull on around your experiences and what you want and then also the application into private practice land. What have you learned in terms of “oh, that might be a job that I want to pursue later or that's an element of health that I really want to steer away from and glad I tasted it,” what have you learned?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! I mean, it's been surprising because I think everyone has a clear pathway when they leave University and it definitely hasn't - so, if I look at what my goals were where I left Uni I haven't really. I've definitely tried the clinical areas that I was interested the time but they had changed and I've changed in a relatively short amount of time. So, what I've learned from locums, I guess, is I mean, I learnt a lot. I enjoy working as part of a team which I found surprising only because, you know, I've done a lot of independent work in the past like as a bench researcher, that's kind of a lone wolf. Yeah! I really enjoy working as part of a team, but I think, for me also, I really like having a job split. So, it's a little bit unusual because I just find working with different groups of people throughout a week really keeps me fresh and engage with different roles, but I do.

JACK O'BRIEN: That's awesome, mate. And I think, even just having a taste of all those different experiences means when the time comes for you to quite, uhm... quite settle down, that you'll know the type of job that's going to suit you best. If it's a private practice type environment, it's a varied caseload with a large team, perhaps, a multidisciplinary environment, means you don't have to waste everyone else's time going into maybe a solo practice or a very specific niche. So, that's a really interesting line, thank you for sharing.

Let's... let's switch gears and maybe put on your proverbial clinic owner hat. How did you see locums being useful for private practices? Is it commercially viable? Do you think there's an economic benefit through locum?

JACK WILLIAMS: For private practice clinic owners, I'm not... I'm not... I'm not... privy to too many numbers or anything like that. But I think... I think, there definitely would be if you take say a 1 to 3 months locum off of, then it will attract people to your area and really get them to try out your clinic 'cause nearly clinics are different having worked in one, and also I did a private practice placement as a student. So, I think for a clinic owner, particularly for filling things like long service leave, I know you guys will have to service, you know, a loyal staff member going away just a minute relatively short period of time. I think there are a benefit. Particularly, if you're in a regional area, just it's a great way to invite people along get them to, you know, essentially try out your team and potentially fall in love with the area, and stay on.

JACK O'BRIEN: Right! It's a great potential recruitment strategy, right?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah!

JACK O'BRIEN: What about the... the concept, and I'm speaking hypothetically here for clinic owners, there might be some pushback, resistance, or fears around someone who comes in and it

doesn't fit the culture of the clinic or it doesn't follow the policies and procedures, it doesn't deliver things the way we would like. Is that real or is that perceived?

JACK WILLIAMS: I think, locums can get in a bit of a reputation if you've had a bad experience. But, I guess, I had... One thing I've been really - I really love about physiotherapy is I guess, the professional standard and the communication kind of synchrony that, you know, professionals have when we talk to each other. And that extends even to our social lives pretty much in every aspect of how we go about it. I say I trust in the busier therapy profession and our training systems that you'll get someone who will be responsive to feedback and who will want to slot into your clinic. But... and you know, that's absolutely what I try and do when I go to a new place, but if you have a bad experience, I think they'll definitely be in minority and you'd be unlucky.

JACK O'BRIEN: Hmm. Yeah, it's good insights, mate. Because I think, yeah, there is this perception around bringing a locum that they're - they're selfish and they just want the massive dollars and not gonna - they're not gonna do the way things we like because they come and go in such a short period. Do you think that's more of a myth that's been perpetuated than what the what you've seen is the reality of it?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah, definitely! I think from what I observed, some of the friends in my locum kind of network, I guess, what attracts them to a locum position is just the ability to travel and experience and work with new people that will help them engage in freshen up with the profession, so they're looking for new attitudes, new ideas. Market pay rates, they change between locums and experienced locums know that. So, you know if you have other things that you can help with a locum, so maybe you can help with accommodation even if it's where the team member or your - yourself. If you have a company car pool that they can have access to, your things like this is actually a really - really big draw card. And I think locums don't necessarily demand that huge or a bonus award - award rate. It's not something that I'm interested in or the people that I talk to.

JACK O'BRIEN: Hmm. Yeah, it's good to know. Yeah! It's definitely a perception that is perpetuated out there. So, you - in your position, let's shift gears, in your position now is the HealthLink'd Podcaster, you get to speak to a bunch of different clinicians across different professions, what are some interesting trends or learnings that you've seen over the - the time you've been hosting your own podcast?

JACK WILLIAMS: Oh! Wow! So yeah, I guess there's been a bunch. So, I started the podcast just because I fell in love with podcast. Like I really - I just discovered the medium probably about 12 months ago and changed the way I learned, it's changed the way I just go about finding new information. I've stopped listening to so much music because I listened to more podcast. Yes, so the goal of the podcast, is to, yeah as you say, talk to a bunch of different health professions just because I'm really interested in interdisciplinary learning. Having done some as a student, I had one particular experience, which was a voluntary experience where we - we built a student

network in Canberra across three universities across multiple health disciplines. And we held student development workshops. It was a really rewarding experience and I think, again, we (inaudible) university not knowing lots of things, but yeah into like multidisciplinary learning is something I really wanted to pursue. So I started the podcast. And talking - talking to different people across different professions has been fantastic. I guess my favorite podcast today was with the Allied Health Director at the Royal Darwin Hospital, so with a Mandurah Keith and she's a speech-language pathologist. And she - she gave a really great insight into what it's like working in a regional area which is parts of Darling and providing a health service to the essentially the whole known (inaudible) using telehealth, and things like that. But also, with some of the recruitment patterns, so it seems it's relatively hard to attract people to a regional area and it gets harder the more experienced they are. So that two to three years of age... sorry, two or three years of experience level is really hard to recruit for and gets harder for five to seven years. I've heard the same things particularly for physio in some parts of Queensland. I was sneaking suspicion that's the case across the board which is why locums can be effective means to address this workforce demand.

JACK O'BRIEN: Yes, it's cool, mate. I've really enjoyed listening to your little snippets on the podcast. It's really interesting. It's some different insights that I think we, as clinic owners, can get in the habit of the echo chamber a little bit and we listen to professional specific stuff or just business stuff. And so, it's really good to hear the perspectives of other professions of not just business owners but clinicians on the ground. So, yeah, I really think your podcast is a must-listen. For those who already love podcast, you can find it on all the players.

As we land this plane Jack, if you could speak to clinic owners around how they lead and inspire, and manage their teams, what something - what some advice that you would give to clinic owners as they mentor young professionals?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah, sure! I guess, it's a tough one, but I think a lot of people who are coming through typically, you know, at my stage above the career I guess, is about two years, I think, my experience with private practice is that I was looking to take ownership of quite a lot of things like community engagement, as well as advertisement, social media, like I was quite ready to take that on board myself. But for some private practices, I know they I'd often delegate this to their administrative team. So, I would - I would really recommend that they asked a therapist if they want to take ownership of social media and also community engagement. And you know, see what the response is. But I think a lot of people want to push their own personal brand, really get involved with particularly, social media, involvement because it's really fun.

JACK O'BRIEN: Yeah, it is a lot of fun. And if I can jump on my soapbox here for a minute, Jack. Clinic owners, as you listen to this, listeners, I think the theme of the thread that's running through this conversation is in around reverse engineering what your team wants. It's our job as leaders, and I'm really passionate about this, is how we do as leaders, as clinic owners, as mentors to create environments where our team members win, - where we understand their

desire statements, understand their dreams and goals, and help them achieve that regardless of the impact that has on in our clinic necessarily. If you've got a team member that wants to travel or has that itch to scratch, how can you, as a clinic owner, facilitate that and make that happen? Because it's going to come back and there'll be rewards that come back to that. Maybe you haven't spoken to your team around their extra clinical passions. Maybe they do have that social media drive or the passion to get out and speak to referral partners. Clinic owners, it is our responsibility to create environments where our team members thrive. And you know, personally, Jack, you I can say that, it really breaks my heart to know that health professionals are burning out or get to the end of their career after five, seven, maybe ten years. I think, that's a disgrace and I think we've got the opportunity to create environments and pathways for health professionals to thrive. And you know, I feel like there's so many that could be just hitting their straps at that five to ten-year mark and it's been coming up on us to not be the ceiling but to lift the roof and make sure that our professions and the health of the clients, that the communities that we look after, continues to thrive. What a privilege it is to be a clinic owner in this in this time and day. I'm really passionate about that and there's such an opportunity as clinic owners to create those environments to mentor and - and see young professionals thrive. And a progressive clinic owners are seeing that opportunity and leading their teams in an inspired way. Then in turn creates amazing patient experiences and sees their clinics grow, and so it all goes around in swings around about, it's all part of this beautiful ecosystem. And your perspective is really refreshing on that, Jack. So, thank you so much for jumping in and allowing me to jump on my soapbox. But also shared your experiences and insights. Maybe people want to listen to your podcast, learn more about yourself, and get in touch, what are some of the ways or ways that we can find you?

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! So, I'm on all the similar platforms that your podcast is on, Spotify, and iTunes. And I'm also active in a lot of social media, platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. But actually, if you want to get in contact with me, particularly, I guess I'm talking a business owner, so if you're looking - if you've got maybe some long service leads that you need to fill or you want to take someone on board for a locum, you have a locum position ready to go, then you can give me a call or text message on 045-5046-178. And I can put it up to my network and hopefully uhm, you know, get someone gets on that you can talk to and help fill - fill the gap.

JACK O'BRIEN: Awesome, mate! Thank you, Jack. And listeners, (we) will link all that up in the show notes. Jack, just so we're clear, what's the name of the podcast and any unique spellings on that?

JACK WILLIAMS: Oh, it's very unique. Yeah, it's - search the [HealthLink'd Podcast](#). So that's H-E-A-L-T-H- L-I-N-K-'-D. Yeah, and I'm sure you'll stumble across it, very active on social media. And yeah, try that one.

JACK O'BRIEN: Well done, mate. We'll link all that up in the [show notes](#). Again, listeners, that's over at clinicmastery.com/podcast. You'll find the show notes from this episode. And you'll

also be able to get in touch. We were able to help unlimited number of clinic owners with our [Business Academy](#), help you with the 7 degrees to grow your clinic through our Business Academy and our mentoring and coaching. So if you need to know, please do get in touch. We would love the opportunity to stay for a good fit and offer some next day implementation advice and potentially help you on going. You'll be able to find all the links for Jack and his podcasts and connections over a clinicmastery.com/podcast.

It has been a dream. Jack Williams, thank you for joining us on the podcast, mate!

JACK WILLIAMS: Yeah! Thanks very much for having me, Jack. It's been great!

JACK O'BRIEN: Listeners, thank you for joining us. We look forward to bringing you another episode again really soon. Bye for now!

Thanks for tuning in to the "Grow Your Clinic Podcast". To find out more about past episodes or how we can help you, head to www.clinicmastery.com/podcast. And please remember to write and review us on you podcast player of choice. See you on the next episode!

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