

# Preparing for Your First Therapy Session

**What to expect and how to get the most from support.**

## Important

This resource is for information and self-support. It is not a substitute for therapy, medical advice, emergency care, or a personalised clinical assessment. If there is immediate danger to life, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E.; For urgent mental health support in England, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

## Before the first session

Feeling anxious before therapy is normal. You do not need to arrive with the perfect words or tell your whole story immediately.

- I know the appointment time and format.
- I know where I will be / how I will connect online.
- I have a quiet enough space if online.
- I have water and something grounding nearby.
- I have planned a little time after the session.

## What you might be asked

- What has brought you to therapy now?
- What would you like support with?
- What feels most difficult at present?
- What helps you cope?
- Are there any current risks or urgent concerns?
- What would you like to be different?

## What you do not have to do

- You do not have to disclose trauma details before you feel ready.

- You do not have to be “good at therapy”.
- You do not have to know exactly what you need.
- You do not have to minimise distress to make it easier for others.
- You can ask questions about confidentiality, boundaries and how therapy works.

## My notes before session

<p>Three things I might want to say:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>	<p>Three things I might want to ask:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>What I hope therapy helps with:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What I feel nervous about:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

## After the first session

It is common to feel lighter, tired, unsettled or reflective after a first session. Give yourself time to settle.

- Drink water.
- Do something ordinary and grounding.
- Avoid judging the whole process from one session.
- Write down anything important I want to remember.
- Contact emergency/crisis support if risk increases.

### Questions I can ask my therapist

How will we decide goals? What happens if I feel overwhelmed? What are the limits of confidentiality? How often will we review the work? How do we know whether therapy is helping?