

First Therapy Session Planner

This worksheet is designed to help you understand the therapy process and get the most out of your first session. Before your first session begins, we encourage you to review the information below, note any questions or concerns, and reflect on your reasons for starting therapy. Preparing in advance can help you get your thoughts in order, as well as reduce anxiety.

Before your first session

Before your first appointment, you will likely need to complete a set of intake forms. These usually involve:

- Your personal and contact information
- Your insurance information (if applicable)
- Your mental health history and current symptoms
- Consent forms, which explain fees and billing, contact with your therapist, and confidentiality (how your information is kept private and when there may be safety-related exceptions)

Notes or questions

Preparing for your first session

Take a quiet, private moment to think about why you would like to begin therapy. This is a helpful process because your therapist will work with you to make a plan for treatment based on your goals and concerns. Using any of the prompts below that are relevant to your situation may help you put your goals and concerns into words:

I've been experiencing difficult:

- thoughts
- emotions
- behaviors
- memories
- stressful situations
- relationships

After working with a therapist, I want there to be differences in how I:

- think
- feel
- act
- remember the past
- cope with stress
- approach relationships

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



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You can also use this space to brainstorm any other concerns or goals you have for therapy:

During your first session

During your first session (“intake appointment”), your therapist will likely have two main goals:

- Telling you about: their approach, the therapy process, and confidentiality and safety
- Asking you about: why you would like to begin therapy, your current mental health symptoms or challenges, and your history (your identity, family, upbringing, health, relationships, and work)

Expect that your therapist may have many questions about many different topics.

At the end of the session, your therapist may:

- Determine a mental health diagnosis, if applicable
- Start going over a treatment plan with you
- Discuss how frequently they recommend meeting (e.g., weekly, biweekly) and how long their sessions are
- Assign homework or something to work on for the next session, or ask you what you plan to work on

You can expect the first session to last 45-60 minutes.

Notes or questions

After your first session

Attending your first therapy session can bring up a lot of thoughts and feelings. Take a moment after your first session to reflect on the experience, and to note any questions or concerns you would like to discuss at your next appointment. Also, congratulate yourself! **You just took a huge step towards supporting your mental health.**

- concerns to discuss next time _____
- questions to ask next time _____

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

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Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.



Find Online Treatment Options Specific to Your Needs

Finding specialized treatment based on age, identity, goals, or diagnosis can make a difference in the efficacy of therapy. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help, with specific resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

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