



Professional support sessions

Pre and post actions



Before your session

There are a range of actions we encourage you to do before your session with a mental health professional.

HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF YOUR SESSION

Having the knowledge of what outcomes you want from your visit may help give you the confidence to engage in the right way with your mental health professional.

WRITE A LIST OF THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BRING UP IN YOUR VISIT

Take some time out in the days leading into your session to write down some things that are in your thoughts or are concerning you. This way you will not forget the things you wanted to acknowledge in your session. Let your practitioner know that you are prepared with some questions too.

ASK SOME LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS

As questions around payment methods, appointment timings, and how frequent you can book in appointments.

MAKE NOTE OF ANY OR ALL MEDICATIONS YOU ARE TAKING

This will give the therapist a chance to get a grasp on your medication intake and give you a second opinion on the right dosage amount if they are qualified to do so.

FIND SOLACE IN THE FACT THAT YOUR SESSION IS KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

Know you can open right up to your practitioner and take comfort in knowing that what is said in that room, stays in that room. The only way your clinician can break patient doctor confidentiality is if they believe your life or someone else's life is in danger, if you give written or verbal consent, or it has been subpoenaed in a court of law. Other than that it remains completely confidential.

ACCEPT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Acknowledge the feelings you are experiencing and try not to protect yourself from them or run away. Log your feelings in a diary or journal so you can relay that to your practitioner in your next visit. But allowing yourself to sit with your emotions before you get into your self-care, will increase your emotional tolerance and help build your mental resilience.

REMEMBER, YOU MAY NOT CONNECT WITH THE FIRST THERAPIST YOU SEE

Every individual is different, just as every mental health professional is different. Find that clinician you can connect with and trust. If you do not connect with the first one you engage with please do not give up, ask to see another or get a second opinion, through your EAP or GP.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SESSIONS

Psychiatrists are medical doctors, psychologists are not. Psychiatrists prescribe medication, psychologists can't. Psychiatrists diagnose illness, manage treatment and provide a range of therapies for complex and serious mental illness. Psychologists focus on providing psychotherapy (talk therapy) to help patients.

A counsellor is a trained, objective professional with whom you can build a healing and trusting relationship. They are trained to offer different types of assistance; most frequently talking-based styles of therapy. Counselling is a process of talking about and working through your personal problems.

Before your session

1. What is the main reason for making the appointment?

2. What changes have you identified in yourself compared to what you are usually like? (I.e. How you usually think, act and feel)

3. What do you want to take away from the session?
(E.g. Strategies to manage stress or anxiety)

4. Outline any questions you want to ask your mental health professional during the session?

5. Outline any medication/s you are taking or have taken previously to manage your mental health or mental illness?

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SESSIONS

After your session

Just like before your session there are a range of actions we encourage you to do after your session with a mental health professional.

KEEP NOTES ON HOW YOU FEEL POST SESSION

Don't try and hide emotions from yourself. Make a note of your feelings and don't over think or over analyse yourself. Give yourself a positive pat on the back as you may have just shared your "inner world" with them. Just know that is ok to feel a little strange, uncomfortable and vulnerable after divulging that information with them.

ACTION ANY SELF-CARE, READING OR RESOURCES

Makes sure you action any self-care or reading of resources that the clinician may have given you. This might include things like mindfulness, reframing and mindset techniques, gratitude journaling, or reading of relevant material. These are actions that you may not of done in the past, but if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got. Have an open mind to better managing your mental health.

KNOW THAT SOME OF YOUR IMMEDIATE REACTIONS WILL PASS

You may have just unloaded a lot of pent up emotions and feelings of discomfort. This may lead you to feeling vulnerable, just know that this is very normal. Just know that you are changing the way you are feeling which is only going to benefit your mental health in the future.

ASK FOR RESOURCES OR ACTIONS TO TAKE AWAY

Let your therapist know that you would like some resources and or actions to take away to implement after your session. This will give the practitioner the confidence that you really want to better manage your mental health. Some actions that they may get you to do could feel foreign or strange at first, but it is important to remember you may need to action new ideas, activities, hobbies etc to get the best outcome for yourself.

DON'T GIVE UP

If your first visit wasn't the desired experience, don't give up. Look at employing another clinician's services. Every individual is different as is every therapist. It may take you multiple practitioners until you find the right one for you.

BOOK YOUR NEXT SESSION

Ensure you book in your next session to continue your mental health journey. Taking a proactive approach will assist you in better managing your mental health. Research tells us that early intervention leads to better outcomes.

YOU MAY FEEL A ROLLER COASTER OF EMOTIONS

Throughout your seeking professional help journey, there may be times you feel great and some days not so brilliant. Firstly, give yourself some positive reaffirmation that you are doing the right thing and sometimes change can be uncomfortable. Then, challenge these uncomfortable perceptions with the fact you are bettering yourself and that you may need to move outside of your comfort zone to achieve your goals.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SESSIONS

After your session

1. Write down aspects that will make up your self-care plan. (E.g. Exercise, sleep, nutrition, talking to others, sunlight, gratitude or mindfulness)

2. Write down who makes up your support network. (E.g. Friends, family, fellow worker, community group, professional, company EAP or anything else that works for you)

*If you don't have a positive social support network that is okay but please know you are not alone. Please refer to our 'Profile of a Good Support Network' Resource and utilise our MHM Support Network Toolbox on the resources section of our website.

3. Write down strategies you have learned and what you need to work on implementing in your life from the session. (E.g. Different mindsets, coping strategies, behaviours, habits, structures or routines)

4. Book and write down your next session date.
