

# Preparing for Your First Therapy Session

*What to expect, what to bring, and how to know if a therapist is right for you.*

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## First — take a breath.

Reaching out for therapy is often the hardest part. If you've made it to a first session, you've already done something significant. You don't need to have it figured out. You don't need the right words. You just need to show up.

This guide is designed to make that first session feel a little less unfamiliar — so you can walk in with some context for what's about to happen, and some language for what you're looking for.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

### The first session is not a deep dive — it's an introduction.

Your first session is primarily about getting to know each other. Your therapist will likely ask about what brought you in, a bit about your history, and what you're hoping to work on. You won't be expected to share everything at once. You won't be pushed to go anywhere you're not ready to go.

It's okay to say 'I don't know how to answer that' or 'I'm not sure where to start.' That's a completely normal place to begin.

### The first session is also about fit.

Therapy works best when you feel safe, understood, and genuinely comfortable with your therapist. That means the first session is as much about you evaluating them as the other way around. Pay attention to how you feel in the room. Does their energy feel right? Do you feel judged or accepted? That instinctive sense matters.

### You may feel emotionally drained afterward.

Even a first session can bring things to the surface that haven't had space before. It's normal to feel tired, emotional, or a bit raw after therapy — especially in the beginning. Try to be gentle with yourself after sessions, particularly early on.

## WHAT TO BRING

You don't need to prepare a presentation. But it can help to reflect on a few things before you arrive:

What brought you here right now — not your full history, just what made you finally reach out. What has shifted or what have you gotten tired of?

What you're hoping will be different — even if it's vague. 'I want to feel less anxious' or 'I want to understand why I keep ending up in the same situations' is enough.

Relevant history — not a comprehensive biography, but anything that feels important context. Major losses, significant relationships, any previous therapy experience and what was or wasn't helpful about it.

Any questions you have — about how the therapist works, what to expect from the process, anything that would help you feel more comfortable.

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## QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING YOUR THERAPIST

These are genuinely useful questions to ask in a first session or consultation — not because you need all the answers, but because the therapist's responses will tell you a lot about whether you're a good fit:

### 'What's your approach? How do you typically work?'

A good therapist can explain their approach in plain language. If the answer is entirely jargon-heavy or vague, that's useful information.

### 'Have you worked with people dealing with [your specific issue]?'

Specialization matters. A therapist who has worked extensively with trauma, or eating disorders, or postpartum struggles brings something different than a generalist.

### 'How will I know if we're making progress?'

A good therapist will have a thoughtful answer to this — and will be open to checking in regularly rather than assuming the therapy is working.

### 'What do you expect from me between sessions?'

Some therapists assign homework or journaling. Others don't. Knowing what's expected helps you show up prepared.

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## HOW TO KNOW IF A THERAPIST IS RIGHT FOR YOU

After a first session, ask yourself:

Did I feel heard — not just listened to, but actually understood?

Did I feel judged, or did I feel accepted?

Did the therapist's approach make sense to me? Could I see myself doing this work with them?

Did anything feel off — a comment that landed wrong, an energy that didn't feel right?

You don't need to feel completely comfortable after one session — first sessions are inherently a little awkward. But you should feel the beginning of safety. A sense that this person could eventually be someone you trust.

If something felt significantly wrong, it's okay to try someone else. Fit matters enormously in therapy. Finding the right therapist is worth the search.

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## **A final note**

You don't need to be in crisis to deserve therapy. You don't need to have a diagnosis, a dramatic story, or a reason that feels 'big enough.' If something in your life isn't working the way you want it to — if you're tired of the same patterns, the same feelings, the same stuck places — that is enough. You deserve support.

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*Book a free 15-minute consultation at [zivvosberg.clientsecure.me](https://zivvosberg.clientsecure.me)*

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