

Preparing for your first Psych Blossom therapy appointment

Welcome to our practice! We are excited to be part of your mental health journey. The National Institute of Health estimates that over 57 million Americans have mental health struggles.

Addressing our mental health needs is essential for our overall well-being, but we know that taking that step is not always easy. We're humbled by clients like you, who start therapy and are committed to their personal growth. You probably already know this, but you are a brave soul. Doing this work is not only for you but for all who come in contact with you and for humanity at large. Thank you! We are committed to you as well! We are here to see you blossom! (I know it sounds cheesy, but it's true, and cute :). We promise to give you *our best* so you can have *your best* life. Here are some tips to help you prepare for your first session.

Before your therapy appointment

- Please complete the intake paperwork. Be as thorough as possible. This will help us better understand your needs and guide us in asking more pertinent questions to meet your goals.
- Schedule your appointment at a time that is convenient for you. Determine if you'd like time to reflect and gather your thoughts before the session or if you prefer being spontaneous and following your gut. If you would rather prepare for sessions, carve out time before sessions to jot down a few points. Setting aside time will help you take advantage of the session time. Remember, showing up and letting whatever you have in mind come up is just fine. Freud said it best: "The subconscious mind is always trying to

become conscious.” Whatever is relevant will surface once you’re ready to face it. Trust the process.

- Lastly, consider logistical things that could help reduce your stress by preparing in advance. We recommend that if you’re coming in person, you get directions to our office to get a rough estimate of how long it will take you to get here. Then, factor in traffic so you know when to leave. If, on the other hand, your sessions are online, just make sure you download the Google Meet app before the session. Get comfortable and find a place where you have privacy and can stay for the entire session. Your therapist will then be able to call you there at the time of your appointment.

During your therapy appointment

- Be comfortable! No need to dress formally, wear something comfortable and cozy instead. Stay hydrated, grab a water bottle, or ask us for tea. If you need to charge your phone or turn it off, go ahead and do so right at the beginning of the session. Plug it and let it do its thing while we talk. If you’re home, we’re sorry, we cannot make you tea. But you got no traffic, lucky you! We recommend you create an environment similar to what we’ve just described so you feel supported and cared for during your session.
- If you’re staying home, ensure you have privacy and are alone in a room where you can speak freely without anybody listening. We recommend you use headphones and turn off notifications before sessions. We kindly ask you to sit comfortably but not to lie down.

Sitting up helps us pay attention and remain focused. Bring a blanket, water, or anything that makes you feel comfortable throughout the session.

- Open up as best you can. We know that for some of us, trust doesn't come easily. You don't have to say everything during your first session, and that's totally fine. You'll build trust and rapport as time goes on. You will feel more at ease sharing as you get to feel safer. It's ok to say that you don't want to talk about a topic at any point during therapy. We respect that and are not here to push you. We'll just help you become curious and better understand your discomfort.
- Lastly, ask questions. Your therapist will cover housekeeping, such as cancellation policy, privacy, duty to protect, etc. Ask clarifying questions so you both have clear expectations moving forward. We, from time to time, say things that could be confusing. Please help us, help you! If your therapist says something you don't understand, stop them and kindly ask them to explain what they mean. If you don't understand something, don't stay confused; ask. The only wrong questions are the ones you don't ask.

After your therapy appointments

- As you think of when to schedule your appointments, it's also important to consider how you process information and emotions. Therapy can be challenging sometimes, and you may not be ready to jump into real life right after sessions. So, schedule your sessions accordingly if you like to reflect and let things sink in. Consider what you have to do after your session is over. Allowing time between therapy and resuming any tasks could be very beneficial.

- It is wise to give yourself time to reflect and sit with whatever comes up after sessions, even if it's not right away. Perhaps you journal, go on a walk, meditate, etc. I encourage you to reflect on the process and content of the sessions. We are eager to retain tips, information, feedback, etc. Reflecting on our process is often overlooked, but it is so important. Pay attention to how you felt before and after the session. Did you notice any shifts in your mood? What brought it on? Was there anything your therapist said that you found particularly challenging to hear? Were there any inconsistencies between what you said and what you wanted to say? What is it difficult for you to be authentic in session, etc? Share your insight with your therapist next time you see them. They will love it. I promise!
- Give it time! It's normal not to have a breakthrough after your first session. As a matter of fact, therapy is like the earth's movement. You don't notice the earth moving yet; the sun rises every morning. If you put in the work, one day, you'll catch yourself breaking a bad habit, taking a step that used to be terrifying, or feeling a sense of peace and lightness that you've never felt before. You may not know what/how it's happening, but it does. Research indicates that your relationship with your therapist is one of the most significant indicators of therapeutic success. So, if it's not working, let us know. We want you to find the person you can truly connect with and who can help you get where you want to be.

If you've read through all this, you're a champ! I hope it helped ease your nerves a bit.

We can't wait to see you blossom!