



## 5+ Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Therapy Appointment

### 1. Prepare Thoroughly Before Your Appointment

- Complete all intake questionnaires and share any relevant reports or letters with your clinician. This allows your clinician to read through these documents beforehand and have any necessary resources ready in the consulting room.
- Take 10-15 minutes to jot down what you want to discuss during your session. Reflect on any changes since your previous appointment and set a clear agenda for what you want to address in the upcoming session.

### 2. Set and Communicate Clear Goals

- Have specific and measurable goals for your therapy. For example, you might want to develop three strategies to cope with stress, experience fewer panic attacks, improve your sleep by two hours per night, or make three new friends you see twice a month.
- Discuss these goals with your clinician and revisit them regularly to track your progress. Be realistic about how much time you can commit to working on these goals between sessions and communicate this clearly with your clinician so they can tailor recommendations to suit your circumstances.

### 3. Schedule Strategically and Regularly

- Book multiple appointments in advance to ensure consistent progress and maintain momentum. Frequent sessions can significantly enhance the effectiveness of therapy.
- Clients who attend sessions regularly are more likely to make sustained progress. While you can always cancel or reschedule with adequate notice, maintaining regular appointments prevents sessions from becoming mere maintenance check-ins rather than steps towards your goals.

### 4. Engage Actively During Sessions

- Take notes during your appointment to help remember the content discussed and the plan of action. Writing things down makes it more likely you'll remember and follow through on specific strategies.
- Be open about any difficulties or uncomfortable feelings. Therapy is a safe space to work through these emotions, and sharing them can reduce stress and facilitate personal growth.
- Actively participate in exercises and discussions during the session. Engage with the activities and be willing to try new approaches suggested by your clinician.

### 5. Reflect and Practice After Each Session

- Set aside at least 30 minutes after each appointment to reflect on the discussions and implement the strategies in your daily life. For those with busy schedules or motivational challenges, consider scheduling this time in your calendar to ensure it happens.
- Engage in self-care after your appointment. Talking about your inner world is significant, so give yourself time to process and integrate new insights. Do something enjoyable, like visiting a cafe or taking a walk, to help absorb the benefits of therapy.
- Monitor your progress and note any changes or improvements. Keeping a therapy journal can help track your journey and identify what works best for you.

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#### \*Disclaimer:

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## Additional Tips for Child Clients

### Involve All Caregivers

- Involve more than just the primary caregiver in the child's therapy. It's beneficial if other key adults, like fathers or grandparents, participate in sessions and support practicing skills between appointments. This collaborative approach helps manage therapy goals more effectively.
- Communicate any challenges or barriers the child faces in completing their therapy "homework." This allows the clinician to adjust recommendations to better fit the child's needs and family dynamics.

### Schedule for Optimal Engagement

- Consider the best time of day for your child to absorb new information. While after-school appointments are popular, some children might be too tired. Morning or weekend appointments might be more suitable if your clinician is available, maximising your child's engagement and benefit from the session.

## General Tips for All Clients

### Be Honest and Open

- Share any concerns or doubts you have about the therapy process with your clinician. Transparency helps build a strong therapeutic alliance and ensures that your needs are being addressed.
- If you feel that progress is not being made, discuss this with your clinician. They can adjust the approach or explore alternative methods to better suit your needs.

### Consider the Fit with Your Clinician

- It's okay to "shop around" for a clinician who best fits your needs. A strong therapeutic alliance is crucial for successful therapy, and it's important to find someone you feel comfortable with.
- If after a few sessions you feel that you're not making progress, bring this up with your clinician. They can help reassess the goals and strategies or refer you to another professional if needed.

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