

Session planning

Preparation for your initial consultation

Thank you for making an appointment to see a psychologist at COGNITION. To prepare for your first consultation, you might find it useful to think about what you wish to achieve from attending.

To help you do this we have listed some questions below for you to answer. There is no need to answer the questions in detail; *a few dot points will be the most helpful* in getting your first consultation off to a good start. Your answers will also give the psychologist you are seeing some idea behind the purpose of your visit and what goals you are looking to reach.

Please note that we do not expect you to complete these questions. Please do so only if you want. If you get busy and it's not practical to do this preparatory work, just ignore this task - it will not in any way detract from your first session. If you are simply too confused about your issues, or just don't know where to start, again ignore this task. Come to your first session and the psychologist will help you sort things out.

If you do want to complete this task, don't feel obliged to work through each question. These questions are here to provide a general starting point for your thinking. Answer those you see as relevant, or as many as you feel able to. If answering the questions makes you feel upset, please stop immediately.

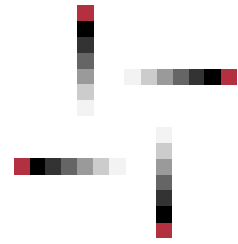
Bring this document to your first consultation and the psychologist will work through this material with you. This will help you work together to agree a plan of action to address your issues, or a treatment plan. We would also like you to be aware that providing this information will not replace the need for the psychologist to take a comprehensive history from you when you first meet, so there is no need for you to feel concerned that you might not have covered everything that is worrying you.

Important note

If your issue is about a serious mental health problem and you are feeling *at risk of self harm*, or are having *thoughts of hurting others*, and this is *an immediate risk*, ***please make contact with someone appropriate right now***, rather than filling in this form and waiting for an appointment. Please contact your doctor immediately, go to the emergency section of the closest major hospital, or contact the 24-hour emergency crisis line on 13 1465. Similarly if your issue is about something that places you at *immediate serious risk* from someone or something else, such as domestic violence, or a drug problem, please contact the police, or the appropriate crisis service. (You will find telephone numbers for these services in the white pages "Health & Help" section, or telephone directory assistance and ask for a number.)

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1. Please summarise the problem/s that you wish to discuss with the psychologist.
2. What would you like to achieve in your *first* consultation with the psychologist? (This question is asking you what would have to happen during this consultation for you to feel your attendance had been worthwhile and/or that you would be willing to attend again, if more than one appointment were necessary to help you with your problem/s.)
3. List the goals you want to achieve from seeking help from the psychologist? Try to make these goals something you and the psychologist will be able to measure, so you will both know if you are making progress. (This question usually relates to what you want to achieve after more than one appointment. It is about the progress you would like to attain after you have spoken to the psychologist and tried out some of the recommendations.)
4. Is there anything else you would like the psychologist to know so that he or she can help you address the matter/s you have raised?