



## **What To Expect During Your First Therapy Session**

Whether this is the first time you are seeking assistance OR you are seasoned, preparing for a session with your new therapist is critically important.

### ***Preparing Information to Share with Your Therapist***

In the beginning of treatment, the therapist will gather basic information to understand your challenges and concerns. It is therefore helpful to take steps to prepare for your first appointment by gathering a list of the following:

- Symptoms: What have you, or people around you, noticed and how long have you been experiencing this
- Personal Information: Gather information, including traumatic events in your past and any current stressors
- Medical History: Physical and mental health conditions
- Medication History: List all medications you take (or have taken) and their associated dosages. This list should include herbal products and vitamins as well

The following questions may also be asked by your therapist:

- When did you first notice symptoms?
- How is your daily life affected by your symptoms?
- What treatment, if any, have you had for your mental health diagnosis?
- Have you tried supportive techniques on your own to feel better or control your symptoms?
- What makes you feel worse?
- Have family members or friends commented on your mood or behavior?
- Are you blood related to anyone with a mental health diagnosis?
- What do you hope to gain from treatment?
- Do you drink alcohol or use drugs?

**If you are feeling nervous or uncomfortable, consider bringing a close family member or friend to your first appointment. This individual may help ease your nerves and, with your permission, may be able to share important facts with the therapist.**



### ***Preparing Questions to Ask Your Therapist***

While it is critical that you prepare information to share with the therapist, it is also recommended that you come with prepared list of questions as well. Some examples include:

- Why can't I overcome these mental health challenges alone?
- What treatment would be best for me?
- Do you think therapy will help?
- Are there medications that might help?
- How long will I be in treatment before I notice an improvement? What can I do to help myself?
- Do you have printed material I can review at home or on my own?

At any point, do not hesitate to ask your therapist questions of any kind. Their job is to guide you towards emotional well-being and you need to feel comfortable with the process.

### ***Cost of Therapy***

Some therapists accept medical insurance which can greatly reduce the cost of treatment. Others do not – leading to a varied hourly rate. Some of these therapists offer a sliding scale for clients who cannot afford the full fee. In addition, there are some community agencies which provide certain services at a low cost. To avoid confusion, be sure you know the expectation of payment ahead of your first appointment.