mindhealth FACT SHEET

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FIRST SESSIONS

Starting therapy

Therapy can't stop life's storms. It builds you real ways to meet them.



A conversation
Structured, confidential, yours

A shared plan
Goals you set together

Skills that build
Practice between sessions

01 What the first session is like

Mostly, it's talking. Your psychologist will ask what's brought you in, what life looks like right now, and what you'd like to change, then start shaping a plan with you. You don't need the perfect words, a diagnosis, or a crisis to "deserve" being there. You're allowed to be nervous; naming that is a good place to begin.

02 How it actually works

Good therapy is active, not just venting. Approaches like CBT, ACT and EMDR are structured and evidence-based: you learn the patterns keeping a problem alive, then practise skills between sessions, where much of the change happens. Fit matters too. If it isn't clicking after a few sessions, say so. Adjusting the approach, or the therapist, is normal.

03 Getting the most from it

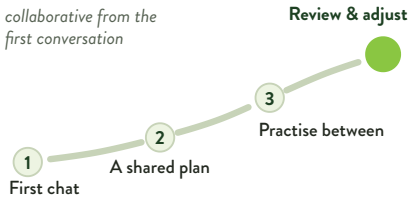
- Jotting two or three goals before you start
- Being honest, including about therapy itself
- Doing the between-session practice
- Giving it a few sessions before judging fit
- Telehealth counts, because comfort helps you talk

A PRACTICAL STORY



THE PATH

How therapy unfolds



A first conversation becomes a shared plan, skills you practise, and reviews that keep it on track.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Before session one

1. Write what you want to change
2. Note what you've already tried
3. Book a quiet spot for telehealth

You can't do therapy "wrong".

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

A GP is the usual first step, so ask about a Mental Health Treatment Plan for Medicare-rebated sessions with a psychologist. You can also book directly with Mind Health.

DID YOU KNOW?

Medicare rebates for sessions with a psychologist, under the Better Access initiative, began in Australia on 1 November 2006.

Australian Government Department of Health, Better Access, 2006

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

You don't need to be at breaking point to start. The best time is usually earlier than feels necessary.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

1300 084 200

MH-CR-230 · v32 · October 2026
© 2026 Mind Health · General information, not medical advice · CC BY-NC-SA 4.0