What to expect from therapy

A short guide for anyone starting out.

It is normal to feel nervous about starting therapy, unsure what to say, or doubtful about whether it will help. You do not need to prepare anything or have it all worked out.

What happens

- **The first session or two** are about getting to know you: what has brought you, what is going on in your life, what you are hoping for. You can say as much or as little as you want.
- **After that,** we work on what matters to you. Sometimes that is talking and making sense of things. Sometimes it is learning and practising something specific.
- **We review as we go.** I will ask how you are finding it. You can tell me at any time if something is not working for you.

What helps therapy work

1. **Being as open as you can.** Including about things that seem small, embarrassing or unrelated.
2. **Saying when something does not fit.** If I get it wrong, or go too fast, I want to know.
3. **Coming regularly.** Long gaps make it harder to build on the last session.
4. **Trying things between sessions.** An hour a week is a small part of your life. Most of the change comes from what you do in the rest of the week.
5. **Patience.** It is common to feel a bit worse before feeling better, as things that have been pushed down come up.

Common worries

The worry	A response
"I will not know what to say."	That is fine. I will help. Silences are allowed.
"My problems are not serious enough."	If it matters to you, it is worth bringing.
"I might cry."	Many people do. Tissues are provided, and it is nothing to apologise for.
"What if I do not like it?"	Tell me. We can change how we work, or I can help you find someone who is a better fit.

Practical things

I will explain confidentiality and its limits, fees, and how to cancel or rearrange when we first meet. Ask about anything that is not clear.

What I am hoping for, and anything I am worried about

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Before my first session

A few notes to bring with you. Fill in as much or as little as you like.

Name _____ Date _____

What has led me to look for therapy now

How long it has been going on, and anything that made it start or get worse

How it affects my day-to-day life (sleep, work, relationships, mood)

What I have already tried

What I hope will be different

Who and what supports me at the moment

Anything I want my therapist to know about what helps me feel comfortable

Questions I want to ask

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