



# WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR FIRST COUNSELING SESSION

**You are on a mental health journey – welcome.**

You deserve to feel safe and supported.

You deserve mental health care that acknowledges and respects the intersection of your identity and experiences.

You are allowed to acknowledge all that makes you a human.

You don't have to suffer in silence.

## What to Expect

Remember that this is your counseling session, meant to help you! So take a deep breath, relax, and know you're in a safe place with a trained, licensed, and trustworthy counselor.

During this first session, the counselor you've selected will ask you lots of questions. Their goal is to learn more about you so they can assess your concerns, current well-being, and determine how to best help you.

## Tip

*This is also an opportunity for you to determine if this counselor is a good fit for you!*

***Not feeling it? No problem (don't feel bad, that happens).***

*You may choose to share with your counselor how they can better meet your needs. However, you also have the option of requesting your next session with a different counselor on the BetterMynd platform for a better fit.*

## How to Prepare

Good news, counseling isn't a test you need to prepare for!

But it could be useful to write down a few notes about why you're seeking help.

What feelings or experiences brought you to this session today? What are you hoping to resolve or feel better about?

## Tip

*Think about "if counseling works for me, this is what will be different in my life" and share your answer with the counselor.*



## Setting Yourself Up for Your First Session

### **Find a private, quiet, safe environment to have your session.**

*You can have your session wherever you feel comfortable. Don't feel self-conscious if that's sitting in your car, your bedroom, or quiet corner of a park. Keep in mind that your session is private, so be sure to be by yourself.*

### **Have access to a working device with internet access, either a phone, tablet, or computer.**

*Your device should have enough battery to last your 50-minute session, so remember to charge it.*

### **Be prepared to have your camera on and be visible to your counselor.**

*Hate being on video? We get it. But don't worry, it doesn't matter how you look! In a counseling session, it's important for your counselor to know how you're feeling and reacting by seeing your facial expressions and reactions. Make this easy by choosing a well-lit area facing the camera.*

## Remember: This is a Safe Space

Counselors on the BetterMynd platform are accustomed to seeing students for a wide range of reasons.

### **Common Issues Students Talk About in Counseling:**

- Feeling consistently low or sad
- Persistent anxiety
- Handling a breakup
- Loss of a loved one
- Past or current experiences of trauma or abuse
- Academic pressures and performance
- Housing or roommate tension
- Challenges with family members or at home
- Experiencing discrimination
- Exploring gender identity

## Tip

*Talk openly about your feelings, this is a safe space.*

*Your counselor is a trusted and trained professional who is ready to support you.*