

# MAKING YOUR TIME COUNT



## About this resource

This handout has been developed to help you create a plan for your first specialist mental health appointment.

GPs and patients can use this handout in a variety of ways. The aim is to make sure that you have the support you need to prepare for your first specialist appointment so that you can get the most out of the time while waiting to see them.

This is your plan, so you do not need to answer all of the questions.

By filling out this handout you are helping make your plan for your first mental health appointment.

## Steps in the process



During your GP appointment, a mental health care plan is developed



Your GP will give you a referral for your first mental health appointment



You can make a plan about what you want from your first mental health appointment



You attend your first mental health appointment

## Let's get started

Once you have decided to access mental healthcare, it can be frustrating to find out that you may have to wait for an appointment. Use this resource to develop a plan to make the most of your time while you wait.

You may find that some of these questions can be hard. Please take your time, come back to it, or complete your plan with a trusted person.

## About me

My Name:	Date I Made This Plan:
<u>GP contact details</u> Name of GP: Name of Practice: Contact Details:	
<u>I have been referred to</u> Service Name: Service Contact Details: Date of First Appointment:	
<u>Who to contact in an emergency</u>	Emergency Services - 000 Mental Health Intake Line – 1800 011 511 Lifeline – 13 11 14
<u>My health professional may contact</u> Name of contact: Contact details: Under what circumstances can this person be contacted?	



By answering the following questions, you can develop a plan to look after yourself while you wait for your first appointment.

1. Who do you find helpful to talk to when you're having a hard time?

2. Are there any early warning signs that you might notice when your symptoms are starting to get worse?

3. What can you do when you notice these warning signs?



Your first appointment is a chance to share your mental health journey and begin to explore treatment options.

1. Who is part of your care team? This could include a GP, a peer support worker, family, friends, church or community services, or other services.

2. What is your mental health service history? (Please include dates if you remember.)

Some things that you might want to include are:

- When did you receive a diagnosis?
- When was the last time you saw a psychiatrist?
- Do you have a MH plan?

3. What past treatments have you tried and what was your experience? Some things that you might want to include are:

- Medication
- ECT
- Drug and alcohol services
- Services such as Head to Health hubs or Headspace



What would you like to get out of seeing a mental health specialist? What are your goals?

You could set goals that help you:

- Develop healthy habits
- Get involved in the community
- Practice self-care
- Improve or build relationships with friends and family
- Find work or a partner

My goals to recovery are to...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



What can I do to support my mental health?

### Fact sheets

Fact sheets can help you understand some of your experiences and provide advice on things you can do that may help.

[Beyond Blue](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/resource-library): <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/resource-library>

[Black Dog Institute](https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/fact-sheets): <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/fact-sheets>  
[Sane Australia](https://www.sane.org/information-stories/facts-and-guides): <https://www.sane.org/information-stories/facts-and-guides>

What would you like to find out more about?

### E-mental health tools

Some psychological therapies can be delivered online in a self-help format. You can also find apps that can help with day-to-day feelings and worries. This can help while you are waiting for face-to-face support.

Head to Health can help you find free, evidence-based programs and apps:  
[Head to Health](https://headtohealth.gov.au): <https://headtohealth.gov.au>

What e-mental health tools would you like to try?



### Staying in touch and asking for help

It is important that your doctor knows if your symptoms or distress are getting better or getting worse. Your doctor can help you revise or make a new plan if you need more urgent care.

If you start to have thoughts of hurting yourself or others, it is important to seek help immediately. You can do this by calling the [Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511](tel:1800011511). It is staffed by mental health professionals who will ask questions to determine if you need ongoing mental health care and how urgently it is needed. The Mental Health Line is available to everyone in NSW and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You may also wish to visit a Safe Haven. A Safe Haven is a place you can go if you're feeling distressed or having suicidal thoughts. To find your closest Safe Haven, visit the [NSW Health website](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/towardszerosuicides/Pages/safe-haven.aspx): <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/towardszerosuicides/Pages/safe-haven.aspx>

You can also call 000 in an emergency.

