

# What to Expect at Follow-Up Psychiatric Appointments

Follow-up appointments are an important part of psychiatric care. They allow progress to be reviewed, treatment to be adjusted where necessary, and ongoing concerns to be addressed in a structured way.

This leaflet explains what usually occurs during follow-up consultations and how to use these appointments effectively.

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## Purpose of Follow-Up Appointments

Follow-up appointments are used to:

- Review current symptoms and functioning
- Monitor progress over time
- Assess the effectiveness and tolerability of treatment
- Make adjustments to medication or management plans where appropriate
- Address new or ongoing concerns

Psychiatric treatment often evolves gradually. Follow-up appointments help ensure care remains **safe, appropriate, and responsive**.

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## What Is Typically Discussed

During follow-up appointments, discussion commonly includes:

- Changes in symptoms since the last visit
- Sleep, mood, anxiety, concentration, and stress levels
- Medication effects, including benefits and side effects
- Adherence to treatment plans
- Work, relationships, and daily functioning
- Any new stressors or life events

The focus is usually on **changes over time**, rather than repeating the full history.

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## Review of Medications

If you are taking medication, the psychiatrist may:

- Review how well the medication is helping
- Ask about side effects or concerns
- Adjust the dose if appropriate
- Discuss continuation, change, or gradual reduction

Medication changes are made carefully, based on **clinical assessment and response over time**.

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## Structure and Time Limits

Follow-up appointments are typically **shorter than initial consultations**.

To make best use of the available time:

- Focus on the most important issues
- Note any significant changes since the last appointment
- Raise medication concerns early in the consultation

If multiple issues need discussion, they may be addressed over more than one appointment.

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## Progress and Expectations

Improvement in mental health is often:

- Gradual rather than immediate
- Variable from person to person
- Influenced by multiple factors

It is common for treatment plans to require **adjustment over time**. Lack of immediate improvement does not necessarily mean treatment is ineffective.

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## Reports, Letters, and Documentation

Follow-up appointments are primarily for **clinical care**.

Requests for letters, reports, or medico-legal documentation:

- May require separate appointments
- Are subject to clinical appropriateness
- May incur additional fees

Please discuss such requests in advance where possible.

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## Attendance and Continuity of Care

Regular attendance at follow-up appointments supports:

- Safe monitoring of treatment
- Continuity of care
- Clear communication with your GP

If you are unable to attend, please provide notice in accordance with clinic policies.

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## Emergencies and Between Appointments

This practice does **not** provide crisis or emergency services.

If urgent concerns arise between appointments:

- Contact emergency services, or
  - Attend your nearest emergency department, or
  - Access crisis support services listed on our website.
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## Questions and Ongoing Care

If you are unsure about any aspect of your treatment or follow-up plan, this can be discussed during your appointment.

Psychiatric care works best when there is **open communication, realistic expectations, and regular review.**

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