

How to get the most out of your time with a psychologist:

1. Having a good relationship with your psychologist is important. Research shows this is a key factor to making progress in therapy. You should feel that you and your psychologist are working together towards your goals. Naturally it takes time to make a connection with someone and the pace is different for all of us, but your psychologist should be talking to you about how this is going.
2. It is important to have an idea of why you want to see a psychologist. Your psychologist will help guide you, but you do need to have an idea of what you want to change.
3. Having specific therapy goals is important. Your psychologist will work with you to develop a treatment plan which will require having specific goals and a way of checking that those goals are being met.
4. Do your best to be honest with your psychologist. It is completely understandable to feel some uncertainty and worry about discussing personal matters, but psychologists are not mind readers and will only know what you tell them.
5. Make sure you are working on goals between your sessions. Most of the change that you are working towards will occur outside of therapy time. Your psychologist will provide you with direction, skills, strategies, exercises or experiments that you can practice between sessions. It is important that you make time for and prioritise this.
6. Taking responsibility for change is key. You may not have had a say about why and how your problems came to be, but you are the only one who can change things for yourself now. Changing unhelpful habits is hard. Your psychologist can guide and support you to make changes but ultimately you are the one that has to do the hard work. Attending appointments, being honest and committing to practice between sessions will help you progress quicker.
7. No judgment - therapy is hard work but putting in the time and effort is the only way to start feeling better. The problems you come to your psychologist with did not develop overnight so be patient and kind to yourself as you navigate your way through your recovery.