

What To Do On A Therapy Waitlist

Find out alternative ways to find available therapists and actions to take while waiting for your first appointment.



See Your Primary Care Doctor: They may be able to refer you to a mental health provider with availability.



Try Teletherapy or Widening Your Search Parameters: Mental health professionals may offer teletherapy. You can also find teletherapy providers through platforms like Talkspace and BetterHelp. Some of these websites have even started to work with insurance companies.

There are several actions you can take while waiting to start therapy to cope with your mental health symptoms and prepare for treatment.



Plan What Questions to Ask the Therapist: In addition to inquiring about insurance and scheduling information, you should also come up with a list of in-depth questions:

- Which therapeutic techniques and modalities do you use most often?
- Do you typically work with individuals with my symptoms?
- Do you typically diagnose individuals, or do you prefer not to make diagnoses?
- Do you consider yourself a culturally competent therapist?
- Are you trauma informed?
- Is medication central to your therapy philosophy?
- How do you handle a crisis?
- How long does therapy typically last?



Use Free Resources:

- **Apps:** Moodfit to allow you to set and monitor your goals, complete activities, and track progress. **Calm** focuses on reducing stress and anxiety through guided meditations, relaxing music and soundscapes, and sleep stories.

- **Reading & Listening:** Try picking up a self-help book or downloading a psychology-related podcast while you're waiting for therapy.
- **Helplines:** When self-care care is not enough and you need emotional support immediately, helplines offer a free, confidential resource. The **National Institute of Mental Health** provides a list of organizations that offer helplines. Many are available 24/7.

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Join A Support Group: There are many national organizations with local chapters across the U.S., groups that meet online, and independent local groups only available in your area. Members meet to share experiences and coping strategies, helping to develop a sense of community.

Take On Some Self-Care: While self-care is not a sufficient solution for people experiencing mental health conditions, it can reduce some symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety.

- **Exercise:** It's been repeated countless times, but there is no discounting the positive effects of routine exercise on mental health.
- **Limit Caffeine, Alcohol, and Nicotine:** Many people lean on caffeine, alcohol, or nicotine during times of hardship. But these substances may worsen psychological distress in some people.
- **Prioritize Sleep:** Sticking to a sleep schedule can help you improve your sleep quality and overall mental health.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Incorporating meditation and breathing exercises into your daily routine can help you stay in the moment and break away from negative thoughts. Although, be aware that mindfulness practices are not recommended for those that have experienced trauma.