

Tips for Talking With Your Mental Health Service Provider

This resource is provided to you as an educational resource. It is not intended as, nor is a replacement for, medical advice and treatment from your doctor.

Communicating With Your Health Care Team

Your mental health service provider is there to help you. He or she understands that the treatment plan needs to work for you and that your role is to express your needs and preferences. There will be times when you agree on how to address concerns, but there may be times when you disagree. Don't be afraid to talk about what you agree and disagree with. That helps keep the conversation open. It also may help find treatment options that fit your preferences.

For example, your provider may want to first try medication to help you. You may want to try talk therapy before taking medication. Or you may be interested in other approaches such as meditation. Tell your provider about your concerns and wants. Get his or her feedback and discuss the options.

You and your provider may have agreed to make decisions together. This means you should listen to his or her treatment ideas and thoughts. Your doctor should listen to and account for your concerns, too.

Ideas for improving communication:

- **Speak up:** Talking to your provider about your concerns is important because it may help align you both to how you feel.
- **Express any doubts:** Talking about any doubts you may have about a treatment may help you and your provider build an open and honest relationship.
- **Seek options:** Explaining your treatment concerns and asking about different treatments may help uncover other options.
- **Be part of the team:** Writing out your goals and sharing them with your provider may help motivate you and track your progress.
- **Prepare for appointments:** Preparing for appointments is important because it may help you share information and/or changes since your last visit.
- **Bring a loved one or friend:** Bringing a loved one or a friend may help you remember information that is being shared.



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Talking with your mental health service provider may be hard. It may be tough to talk about difficult or sensitive issues. Sometimes, the hardest part is figuring out how to start. Remember: one good place to start is to keep communication with your provider open and respectful.

Below is a worksheet you can fill out before your next appointment to help you communicate with your provider.

At my next appointment...

I want my provider to hear how I feel about our appointments:

I want my provider to hear how I feel about my treatment:

I want my provider to hear how I feel about my participation in our decision making:

I want to express these concerns:

I want to ask these questions:



Questions? Concerns?

**Never hesitate to ask.
You have a right to
know everything
about your health
and your care.**