

Questions to bring to a psychiatric evaluation

A short list of useful questions for the first or second visit with a psychiatrist or prescribing clinician.

About the diagnosis

- What is the working diagnosis at this point?
- What would change that diagnosis as we learn more?
- What other conditions are on the differential?

About the plan

- Why this medication rather than another in the same class?
- How long until I should expect a meaningful change?
- What side effects are common in the first two weeks, and which ones should prompt me to call you?

About follow-up

- How often will we meet at first, and how does that change later?
- How do I reach you between visits if something is unclear?
- What is the plan for refills and for tapering if we decide to stop?

About non-medication options

- Do you recommend therapy alongside this, and what kind?
- Do you have referrals you trust?
- Are there lifestyle changes you would prioritize first?

About expectations

- What does a good outcome look like at three months?
- What does it look like at a year?
- How will we know if the plan is working or if we need to change it?

Bringing a written list of questions to a first visit is a normal and useful thing to do. Most clinicians appreciate it.

Reviewed by Shariq Refai, MD, MBA. Educational only. Not medical advice.

