



How to Get the Most From Your Initial Online Psychiatry Appointment

Accessing mental health support has become more convenient with the advent of online psychiatry. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), there was an increase in Americans who used [telehealth services for mental healthcare](#), jumping from 49% in 2020 to 59% in 2021.

For many, the thought of a first psychiatrist appointment can be daunting. But pursuing mental health treatment does not have to feel intimidating. Knowing what to expect eases any concerns you have. Whether you're grappling with anxiety, depression, [ADHD](#), or other mental health concerns, it's essential to know how to navigate this platform.

This blog aims to guide you through your initial online psychiatry appointment, ensuring you make the most of this vital step towards mental wellness.

Factors to Consider When Choosing an Online Psychiatry Service

Before diving into your first appointment, it's crucial to [select the right online psychiatry service](#). Find a provider who aligns with your needs and expectations. Consider factors like:

- Qualifications and experience of the psychiatrists or psychiatrist nurse practitioners
- Privacy and security measures in place
- Cost, insurance, and payment options
- Ease of scheduling
- Communication channels
- Patient reviews and feedback
- Types of services (such as medication management or cognitive-behavioral therapy)

What to Expect on Your First Psychiatrist Appointment

Once you've chosen your online psychiatry provider, it's time to focus on your first appointment. This step is pivotal in your mental health journey, marking the beginning of personalized care and support. Here's what you can expect during this initial encounter.

Before the Visit

Preparation is key. Before your initial psychiatric evaluation, you need to have a clear idea of what you want to address. Rank your concerns in order so you can focus on the most important ones. This information will help your psychiatrist understand your situation better. You will get on a better path to mental health wellness and recovery with this strategy.

Expect to receive your login details for the doctor's virtual portal and video platform. Before the appointment, make sure to:

- **List Your Concerns and Symptoms:** Clearly outline what you are experiencing and any specific issues you want to discuss.
- **Gather Your Medical History:** Include any relevant medical records, previous mental health treatments, and family history of mental health issues. Keep records of any lab work and other important health information. Submit this to your [psychiatrist or psychiatric NP](#) before your call.
- **Prepare Your Device and Network:** Ensure you have a reliable internet connection and understand how to use the online platform.
- **Complete Pre-Appointment Paperwork:** Fill out any required forms or questionnaires in advance. Answering an intake form makes it easy for patients to rank in order what they want to address.

This guide also applies to those not new to psychiatric consultations but want changes to their treatment plan. It's completely acceptable if your priorities change over time. Symptoms may evolve, prompting new concerns. For instance, job changes are a common source of stress for many. Sometimes, what initially appears as depression may later manifest as anxiety due to changes in your environment. Feel free to include this information on your pre-appointment form or discuss it with your healthcare provider.

During the Psychiatric Evaluation

The psychiatry provider will introduce themselves, explain their services, discuss how the online platform works, and review confidentiality.

Your first appointment will typically involve an in-depth assessment. It is generally structured and covers your psychiatric history from childhood to the present. Be open and honest; this is a safe space to share your concerns and experiences.

The psychiatry provider will interview you about the following:

- Your mental health concerns and symptoms
- Medical history, previous treatment, etc.
- Family history of mental illness
- Lifestyle factors, substance use
- How symptoms impact daily life

Based on the evaluation, the psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner will diagnose any conditions and discuss treatment options like medication or psychotherapy.

Here are some questions to ask your psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner.

1. What are your areas of specialty and therapeutic approaches?
2. What might my treatment plan look like based on my concerns?
3. How often would I need follow-up appointments?
4. If needed, how long will I be on medication?
5. What are alternative approaches to medication for treating my mental health condition(s)?

Wrapping up the Visit

At the end of your appointment, your psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner summarizes the main takeaways. This is also the perfect time to ask the remaining questions. Then, they will discuss a preliminary treatment plan and schedule a follow-up. Ensure you understand the next steps and feel comfortable with the proposed plan. In our practice, we also send written information and care plans after the visit to help patients keep track of their priorities.



Continuity of Care

While the initial intake evaluation is crucial, it's just your first step when seeking mental health treatment. [Continuity of care](#) is a vital factor in your journey to mental wellness. It involves maintaining a consistent and ongoing relationship with your mental health professional. This ensures that your treatment is effective, personalized, and adaptable.

Many online psychiatry services offer various tools and platforms to enhance this continuity. These may include online patient portals, secure messaging systems, and [telepsychiatry appointments](#) (video or call), all designed to provide consistent and convenient access to mental health care. Patients find this helpful because it allows them to ask non-urgent questions anytime.

To ensure that your path to mental wellness is well-managed, consider the following tips:

1. Track Your Progress

Note any changes in your symptoms, responses to medication, or lifestyle adjustments. Your psychiatry provider uses this record to adjust your treatment.

2. Plan Your Next Psychiatric Evaluation

Regular check-ins are crucial for ongoing care. To monitor your progress, schedule any follow-up appointments recommended by your psychiatry provider. We make this easy for patients by allowing them to schedule their follow-up at the end of their initial visit.

3. Maintain Communication

Between visits, utilize patient portal messaging to contact your doctor with any questions. These channels are beneficial for discussing non-urgent issues or questions that arise between appointments. We find that having an open forum for patients to discuss their concerns between appointments decreases worries and [anxiety](#).

4. Keep Your Records

Document your symptoms, medication effects, and questions for your next appointment. Maintain these records for outside medical visits and communicate this with your psychiatry provider.

5. Prepare for Emergencies

Know what 24/7 emergency mental health services are available. For mental health emergencies, make sure that your psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner offers 24/7 support through their portal or by phone.



The Best Online Psychiatry Care Is Just a Few Clicks Away!

Embracing the convenience and effectiveness of online psychiatry is a significant move toward improving mental health. By preparing for your initial appointment, asking the right questions, and remaining engaged throughout the process, you can make the most of your online psychiatry experience.

Peak Wellness Psychiatry stands out for its ease of use, confidentiality, and personalized approach, ensuring that each session meets your unique needs. With just a few clicks away, gain access to compassionate and skilled [psychiatric nurse practitioners](#) dedicated to your well-being.

Schedule a consultation by filling out our [online form](#) or calling us at 888-909-8676.