



MELBOURNE
COUNSELLING
CENTRE

Here for you. Backed by care.

Your Mental Health Matters

Support, Understanding
and Positive Change



Compassionate care.
Professional support.
Stronger together.

How to Prepare for Your First Counselling Session

A practical guide to feeling prepared, comfortable and confident



Individual
Support



Relationship
Counselling



Mental Wellness
& Growth

SAFE SPACE. REAL CONVERSATIONS. LASTING CHANGE.

How to Prepare for Your First Counselling Session

Starting counselling can feel like a big step. Many people feel nervous, unsure, or wonder what to expect. This is completely normal. Your first session is simply an opportunity to meet your counsellor, talk about what has brought you to counselling, and decide how you would like to move forward together.

There is no 'right' way to prepare, but a little planning can help you feel more comfortable and get the most from your appointment.

Before Your Appointment

Think about why you booked:

- What has been happening recently?
- What is worrying or upsetting you?
- What would you like to be different?
- What do you hope counselling will help you achieve?

Even if your answer is 'I don't know, I just know I'm not coping,' that is enough.

Write Down Your Thoughts

Make a few notes about important life events, current stresses, symptoms, questions, and goals. Your counsellor can help organise these during the session.

If Your Session Is Online

Test your internet, camera and microphone. Choose a quiet private space, silence notifications and have a glass of water nearby.

What to Expect in Your First Session

Your first appointment is a starting point. You can take your time, ask questions and work with your counsellor at a pace that feels manageable.

What Happens During the First Session?

Your counsellor will explain confidentiality, ask about your concerns and history, discuss your goals, answer questions and develop a plan with you. You do not need to tell your whole life story in one session.

It's Okay to Feel Nervous

Many people worry they will cry, not know what to say, or be judged. These feelings are normal. Counsellors provide a safe, supportive and non-judgemental environment.

Be Honest

Counselling works best when you are as honest as you feel comfortable being. It's okay to say you're nervous or don't know where to start.

What Should You Bring?

- A list of medications, if relevant
- Referral letters, if applicable
- Your notes or questions
- Water if attending online

Remember

The first session is about understanding your situation, building trust and taking the first step towards positive change.

You Are in Control

You always have the right to ask questions, take your time, choose what you discuss and work collaboratively with your counsellor.

A Simple First-Session Checklist

Before	Think about what brought you to counselling and jot down any questions.
Set up	If online, choose a private space and check your technology.

During	Be as open as you feel comfortable being and ask questions when needed.
After	Give yourself time to reflect on the session and any next steps.

Key Takeaways

You do not need to have everything worked out before your first counselling session. Showing up is the first step.

- ✓ It's normal to feel nervous.
- ✓ You don't need to prepare perfectly.
- ✓ Write down important points.
- ✓ Find a private space for online sessions.
- ✓ Be honest.
- ✓ Your counsellor is there to support you.
- ✓ The first session is the beginning of your journey.

Professional online counselling for individuals and couples across Australia.

"Taking the first step is often the hardest—but it can also be the beginning of positive change."

Melbourne Counselling Centre