



Therapy Intake Question Checklist

Keep beside you during the first session. Check each off as you cover it, and adapt to the client in front of you.

Non-Negotiable Questions

- What brings you here today, and what made you decide to seek help now?
- Have you had thoughts of harming yourself or others, now or in the past?
- What are your current coping strategies when things get difficult?
- Are you currently taking any medications or receiving treatment for physical/mental health conditions?

Opening the Conversation

- What brings you here today?
- When did you first notice these feelings or concerns?
- What made you decide to reach out now?
- Who are the important people in your life?
- What does a regular day look like for you?
- What brings you joy, and what drains you?

Support Systems & Strengths

- When life gets tough, who do you go to for help?
- What strategies have helped you so far?
- What kind of support are you hoping to find in therapy?
- What would your best friend say about your strengths?
- What makes you feel safe and supported?
- How do you handle changes in your life?

Domains to Cover

- Presenting concerns — primary reason, duration, impact, prior attempts
- Personal history — family, development, education/work, life events
- Mental health status — prior experiences, family history, current symptoms, risk
- Support systems — family dynamics, relationships, coping mechanisms
- Physical health — medical conditions, sleep, exercise, nutrition
- Environmental context — living situation, work/school, culture, finances
- Strengths — personal strengths, interests, what's working
- Treatment goals — expectations, desired outcomes, timeline, barriers

Adapt for Specific Client Groups

- Couples — "What brings you both in now?" + commitment scale 1-10
- Teens — "Is coming here something you wanted?" + school, peers, identity
- Older adults — memory changes, recent losses, social isolation
- Trauma survivors — signal safety first; assess current safety & grounding
- Young children — interview parent: pregnancy, milestones, daily routines

