

# Questions and Information For Your Psychiatrist About Your Medications

*A guide to help you prepare for  
your visit to your psychiatrist*



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Excerpted from  
*Using Medications as Part of the Recovery Process*  
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## PREPARING TO MEET WITH MY PSYCHIATRIST

*The following questions can be helpful in preparing for your appointment with your psychiatrist or nurse specialist. It can often be helpful to fill this out with someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, peer counselor, advocate, residential counselor, therapist or case manager.*

1. Describe the distressing experience(s) or symptom(s) that is bothering me, and/or that is disturbing to other people.

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2. Does this distressing experience or symptom effect:	YES	NO	N/A
my relationships/friendships?	_____	_____	_____
my ability to work?	_____	_____	_____
my ability to live where I want to live?	_____	_____	_____
my ability to take care of myself	_____	_____	_____
my ability to do the things I enjoy in life?	_____	_____	_____
my ability to be the person I want to be in life?	_____	_____	_____
my self-esteem?	_____	_____	_____
my health?	_____	_____	_____
my safety?	_____	_____	_____
my ability to participate in programs or groups that might help me in my recovery process?	_____	_____	_____
other things not listed above?	_____	_____	_____

3. Is this a symptom I can live with at this time or do I want to try to do something about it? (Check one)

Yes, I want to do something about it.

No, I can live with this symptom.

I can live with this symptom but others around me find it too disruptive and so I feel I have to change or eliminate it.

I can live with this symptom and even though others find it too disturbing, I do not want help to change or eliminate this symptom at this time. The consequences of this choice may be:

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4. Has anything other than medications ever helped in the past with this distressing experience(s) or symptom? Examples might be meditation, therapy, exercise, art-work, acupuncture, diet changes, lowering my caffeine intake, stop taking street drugs or using alcohol, etc.

YES       NO      If you answered yes, please explain.

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5. Can I think of any non-medication things I can do to help to relieve or reduce the intensity of this distressing experience(s) or symptom(s)?

YES       NO

6. Have any medications in the past helped you with this distressing experience or symptom?

YES       NO

If you answered yes, list those medications and any dosages you can remember.

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*(To be completed before my appointment.)*

## NOTES TO BRING TO MY MEETING WITH MY PSYCHIATRIST

***These are things I want to tell my psychiatrist.***

1. Describe the distressing experience(s) or symptom(s) I specifically want help with.

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2. When does this symptom(s) occur, i.e., mostly at night, in the morning, after eating, in social situation, only when I am alone, after seeing my family, etc.?

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3. When, if ever, does this distressing experience(s) or symptom(s) *NOT* occur?

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4. How often does this experience(s) or symptom(s) occur, i.e., every day, 5 times a day on average, once a week, all the time, only when I'm anxious, it seems to vary and have no specific pattern, etc.?

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5. What are the things that I have tried in the past that have worked to help me cope with this symptom and that I feel I should share with my psychiatrist.

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*(To be completed during appointment with psychiatrist)*

***These are things to remember to ask your psychiatrist. There is space provided for your notes.***

6. If your psychiatrist suggests a medication for you to use, don't forget to ask: "Exactly how will I know if this medication is working for me?" and "How long before I should start to notice an effect from this medication?"

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7. Ask, "What are the side effects associated with this medication?"

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8. Ask, "If I should experience any of these side effects, what can I do about them?"

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9. Ask, "How can I contact you if, during my medication trial, I have questions or concerns I want to check out with you?"

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10. Ask, "How long should my trial period on this medication last?", and "When is my next appointment?"

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