

Starting an Evidence-Based Psychotherapy

Evidence-based psychotherapies (EBPs) are specific treatments that have been shown to be effective through strong scientific evidence. This type of therapy is different from supportive counseling, which mainly focuses on talking through problems. EBPs tend to be very structured, with therapy sessions usually following a set format.

This is what an EBP session typically looks like:

Orientation/Check-in (first 2-5 minutes of the session)

Mood Check: Every week, your provider will start by asking you to rate your current mood.

Review Outcome Measures: Outcome measures are brief questionnaires that ask you about your symptoms. You and your provider will track your symptoms over time to make sure treatment is working.

Agenda Setting (next 2-5 minutes of the session)

You and your provider will work together to set an agenda for the day's session. Agenda items are prioritized to determine what is discussed in the session.

Homework Review (next 5-10 minutes of the session)

Your provider will review any homework assigned from the previous week, focusing on how the assignment turned out and what you learned from it. If you were not able to complete the homework, then your provider will use this time to work with you to problem-solve any difficulties you had with the assignment.

Discussion of Agenda Items (next 20-30 minutes of the session)

This is the "meat" of the session. Depending on your goals for therapy, agenda items can include many different things, such as learning new skills, assessing your thinking patterns, talking through how to handle upcoming situations, and discussing follow-up appointments. It is easy to get distracted by an in-depth discussion of what happened since the last session, so you and your provider have to work together to stay on track.

New Homework (last 5-10 minutes of the session)

You and your provider will decide what sort of homework assignments will be done between sessions. Make sure you ask questions about the homework and agree with what it will involve. If you feel you are not ready for something or do not understand it, then let your provider know.

