EKUM
PSYCHOTHERAPY AND WELLNESS

Your First Therapy Session: *What to Expect*

A FREE GUIDE FROM EKUM PSYCHOTHERAPY & WELLNESS

A note before we begin

If you're reading this, you've already done one of the hardest parts: you've started thinking about getting support for yourself. That takes courage, especially when you're used to taking care of everyone else.

It's completely normal to feel nervous before a first session. You might wonder what to say, whether your problems are "big enough," or whether you'll cry. (You might. That's okay too.) This short guide walks you through what to expect, so you can walk in, or log in, feeling a little more at ease.

Warmly,
Ekta Lather, Registered Psychotherapist

Before your first session

You don't need to prepare anything. But if it helps you feel ready, here are a few gentle suggestions.

- **Check your insurance.** Ask your provider whether your plan covers a "Registered Psychotherapist" and how much per year. If you're with Sun Life, I bill your plan directly.
- **Find a private space** if we're meeting online: somewhere you won't be overheard, with headphones if you have them. Your car, a closed bedroom or a quiet office all work.
- **Jot down a few thoughts,** if you like. What's been feeling heavy? What made you reach out now? What would you like to feel differently? A few words is plenty.
- **Fill in the intake and consent forms** I send you before we meet. They help me understand you a little before we start.

You don't need the right words or a clear reason. "I just don't feel like myself" is a perfectly good place to begin.

What happens in the first session

Our first session is 50 minutes, and it's simply about you. There's no test and no right way to do it. Here's roughly how it flows.

1. **Settling in.** We'll start slowly. If we're online, we'll make sure the connection works and you feel comfortable.
2. **Privacy and consent.** I'll explain how I keep what you share confidential, and the few rare situations where the law requires me to share information to keep someone safe. You can ask anything about this.
3. **Your story.** I'll ask what brought you here, what's been happening in your life, and a little about your background, health, relationships and culture. Share only what you're ready to. You can always say "I'm not ready to talk about that yet."
4. **What you hope for.** We'll talk about what you'd like to feel or change, even if it's as simple as "I want to sleep better" or "I want to feel like myself again."
5. **Next steps.** I'll share some initial thoughts on how we might work together, and we'll decide together whether to book another session and how often.

You're welcome to speak in English, Hindi or a mix of both, whatever feels most natural.

After the session

You might feel lighter. You might feel tired, emotional or a little raw. All of that is normal. Opening up takes energy, so be gentle with yourself afterward: drink some water, take a short walk, or give yourself a quiet moment before jumping back into your day.

How to know if it's the right fit

The relationship between you and your therapist matters more than almost anything else. After our first session, ask yourself:

- Did I feel listened to, not judged?
- Did I feel safe enough to be honest, even a little?
- Did I feel my culture, background and values were respected?
- Do I have a sense of how we might work together?

If the answer is mostly yes, that's a good sign. If something didn't feel right, please tell me. I won't be offended, and if I'm not the best fit, I'll do my best to point you toward someone who is.

Questions you can ask me

Therapy is a two-way relationship, and you're allowed to ask questions too. Some women find these helpful:

- How do you usually work with what I'm going through?
- How often should we meet, and for how long?
- What happens if I need to cancel or take a break?
- Will my insurance cover this, and how do I claim it?
- Can we bring my body, culture or spirituality into our sessions?
- How will we know if therapy is helping?

The practical details

Free consultation	20 minutes, virtual, no cost
Individual session	50 minutes, $160
Couples session	50 minutes, $180
Where	In person near Eglinton & Bathurst, Toronto, or virtual anywhere in Ontario
Languages	English and Hindi
Payment	Visa, Mastercard, e-Transfer
Insurance	Sun Life billed directly; receipts provided for all other plans
Cancellations	Please give at least 24 hours' notice

Ready to start? Book your free 20-minute consultation at **ekum.ca**, email **ekumwellness@gmail.com** or call **647-571-5558**.

If you are in crisis or thinking about harming yourself, please don't wait for a session. Call or text 9-8-8 (Suicide Crisis Helpline), call 911, or go to your nearest emergency department.

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