

## Checklist your doctor

The job of a doctor is to deal with pain, whether its physical, mental or a mixture of the two their job is to help you. The UK's NHS mental health services are a complete mess so it's very important that you build a relationship with your GP and explain clearly what help you need and make sure they give it to you. Your GP has a duty to care for you. If you're feeling very low you might want to take a friend with you to spell things out for you. Also, you can print out this checklist and take it with you. Don't worry about how this might look, the key is to communicate what you need.

Communicate clearly that you are in pain and need help

Depression and anxiety are the most common problems in the UK, and gets diagnosed if you've experienced symptoms for 2 weeks or longer. Do not underplay how bad you are feeling. It's not your job to make your doctor feel better.

Get assessed. You need to get an assessment by someone that is clinically trained. You are likely to be assessed by someone over the telephone. This is a very important stage for you to go through because without having an idea of what is going wrong for you it's hard to set up the right treatment.

There is a lot of diversity in treatments available, from low intensity or short term Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to more long term psychotherapy and counselling. Some doctors now have in house services, others not and the biggest NHS programme is called IAPT. Make sure that your doctor explains in detail what they can offer you before you agree to a course of action. If you're not happy with the answer go home, have a look on the internet and locally at services and go back to your doctor. Have a look at [Saneline](#).

Read up about any medication before you take any pills (Mind has good info [here](#)). The most common anti-depressants are SSRIs – a lot of people take them but they may not be for you so read up and also do not discount having a talking therapy as well - in fact we would recommend it.

Do not leave the surgery until you are clear what help you are being offered, who is offering it and who is taking clinical responsibility for you.

You do not have to accept any treatment immediately. It's ok to take time to think about treatment options if you want to go home and do your own research.

You can ask to see another doctor if you are unhappy with the support you've been offered.

You can contact the main professional bodies to see which therapists are practicing locally and how much they cost. These are some of them: British Association of Psychotherapy and Counselling (BACP), United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC), Foundation for Psychotherapy and Counselling (FPC).

If you're really on the edge and you're not happy with the help you can access today just call the Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90 (UK) 1850 60 90 90(ROI). If you think you are really at a tipping point then go to your nearest A&E and ask to speak to the Psychiatric Liaison Team.

Don't be put off by embarrassment or the stigma that often goes with telling someone that you are struggling. Your doctor's job is to help you, not to judge you.

Always tell someone after you've visited the doctor and make them give you a hug.