



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

A Practical & Emotional Preparation Checklist

Appointments, meetings, assessments or important conversations can feel emotionally overwhelming, especially for people experiencing anxiety, trauma, neurodivergence, burnout or emotional stress.

Many people struggle with:

- Overthinking beforehand
- Fear of judgement or not being believed
- Emotional overwhelm during appointments
- Forgetting important information under stress
- Feeling emotionally exhausted afterwards

This checklist is designed to help reduce pressure and support emotional preparation before difficult appointments or meetings.

1. Before The Appointment

Have you:

- ☐ Written down important points you want to remember?
- ☐ Made a list of questions or concerns?
- ☐ Gathered any documents or information you may need?
- ☐ Checked the appointment time and location?
- ☐ Planned transport or travel arrangements?

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- ☐ Allowed extra time to reduce stress or rushing?

2. Emotional Preparation

Have you:

- ☐ Reminded yourself that it is okay to feel nervous?
- ☐ Allowed yourself emotional support beforehand?
- ☐ Planned ways to reduce overwhelm where possible?
- ☐ Identified anything that may help you feel calmer?
- ☐ Considered bringing someone supportive if appropriate?
- ☐ Reminded yourself that needing support is not weakness?

3. During The Appointment

Can you:

- ☐ Refer to written notes if your mind goes blank?
- ☐ Ask for clarification if you feel confused?
- ☐ Take your time asking or answering questions?
- ☐ Say if you are feeling overwhelmed?
- ☐ Ask for information to be repeated or explained differently?
- ☐ Remember that you do not need to explain yourself perfectly to deserve support?

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4. Neurodivergence & Overwhelm

If you are neurodivergent or emotionally overwhelmed, have you considered:

- ☐ Sensory needs or overstimulation?
- ☐ Bringing water, headphones or comfort items if helpful?
- ☐ Taking notes during the appointment?
- ☐ Asking for written information where possible?
- ☐ Planning recovery time afterwards?
- ☐ Reducing pressure to appear perfectly “put together”?

5. After The Appointment

Have you:

- ☐ Allowed yourself time to decompress afterwards?
- ☐ Avoided immediately over-analysing everything said?
- ☐ Planned something calming or supportive after the appointment?
- ☐ Recognised that difficult appointments can be emotionally draining?
- ☐ Been compassionate with yourself afterwards?
- ☐ Given yourself permission to rest?

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Reflection

Stress, trauma, anxiety, burnout and neurodivergence can all affect:

- Memory
- Concentration
- Emotional regulation
- Communication
- Nervous system safety

Many people feel pressure to present themselves perfectly during appointments while privately struggling emotionally.

You do not need to be perfect to deserve support, understanding or empathy.

Important Reminder

Feeling nervous, overwhelmed or emotionally exhausted around important appointments is more common than many people realise.

Your needs and wellbeing still matter.

Support & Further Resources

Small preparation steps can help reduce emotional overwhelm and create more manageable experiences over time.

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Turning silence into understanding through lived experience.

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