

BIRP Note Cheat Sheet

Reviewed by the BastionGPT Clinical Advisory Board · July 2026

A BIRP note is a four-part progress note format: Behavior, Intervention, Response, Plan. Its strength is forcing the intervention-and-response thread onto the page, exactly what payer reviewers read for. A typical BIRP note runs 150 to 300 words.

B – Behavior what you observed and what the client reported

Do: record presentation, affect, engagement, quotes, screening scores (PHQ-9, GAD-7, PCL-5), and changes since last session.

Pitfall: opinions written as observations; "manipulative" is a judgment, "asked three times to extend the session" is a behavior.

I – Intervention name what you actually did

Do: name the techniques (cognitive restructuring, exposure, motivational interviewing) and tie them to a numbered treatment-plan goal.

Pitfall: "supportive psychotherapy given"; Medicare's coverage policy says that alone is not adequate documentation.

R – Response the section reviewers read first

Do: record participation, reaction to each intervention, and what changed or did not change toward the goal.

Pitfall: skipping response entirely; an honest "no change yet" is better documentation than silence.

P – Plan what happens next

Do: list specific, dated next steps: interventions, homework, referrals, next appointment, and the rationale for any plan change.

Pitfall: a bare "continue treatment" with no thread back to the goal.

Before you sign

- ☐ Behavior has observables or a score, not judgments
- ☐ Intervention named, tied to a numbered plan goal
- ☐ Response records participation and change or no change
- ☐ Note stands alone without the rest of the chart
- ☐ Time recorded for time-based codes
- ☐ Signed with credentials, dated promptly

Drafting with AI

Capture 30 seconds of bullets in session: observations, interventions used, client response, scores, risk status, plan changes.

"Draft a BIRP note from these bullets for a CPT session, PTSD, session 7 of 12: ..."

Never paste client-identifying information into consumer AI tools. BastionGPT is HIPAA-compliant with a signed BAA on every plan.

150–300 words
typical length

10–20 min by hand
clinical team estimate

After each contact
when it's written

**Care team · payers ·
auditors**
who reads it

BIRP Note Template

Copy or print for your practice · Adapt fields to your organization's, payer's and jurisdiction's documentation requirements.

Client (initials): _____ Date: _____ Session #: _____

Service: ☐ individual ☐ group ☐ telehealth _____ Start/stop or total time: _____

B – Behavior

Observed presentation, mental status, scores, client report, changes since last session

I – Intervention

Named techniques used this session, tied to a numbered treatment-plan goal

R – Response

Participation, reaction to each intervention, change or no change toward the goal

P – Plan

Next steps: interventions, homework, referrals, next appointment, plan changes with rationale

Clinician signature / credentials: _____ Date signed: _____