



DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANXIETY

There are different types of anxiety. Some people have a fear of public/social gatherings, others fear open spaces. Some people have a fear about driving or flying.

Anxiety can arise as a result of any of these fears and we take steps to avoid the situations that give rise to them. In some cases, we shut down our lives until we can only feel 'normal' when we are in a safe place.

Panic attacks are a severe form of anxiety and can crop up repeatedly without any particular triggers. It is at times like these that we feel we are like a pressure cooker about to explode from containing our fears.

GETTING HELP

Some people are ashamed of their fears and hide them away from everyone except those closest to them. They avoid situations which make them anxious until they are only doing 'safe' activities.

If you have 'shut down' aspects of your way of life because of your fears you could find it helpful to discuss this with a professional counsellor.

If you want to discuss your fears with me you can contact me by email (gill@gjcounselling.co.uk) and we could discuss how we might work together.

I would help you to identify the thoughts that keep you trapped in an anxious space, where you can't find any way out.

We would work together to challenge and confront the fears and devise ways of reducing the stress in situations which you have previously avoided.

A LEAFLET PREPARED BY

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ANXIETY



ANXIETY

Anxiety is a fear of something which hasn't yet happened. We all feel anxiety at some time or other, it's a useful warning system of danger but sometimes the fear gets out of control and starts to affect how we live our lives.

Managing Anxiety



SITUATIONS WHICH MAKE US ANXIOUS

When we feel trapped or forced to do something which has caused us anxious feelings in the past.

When we can't avoid such a situation.

When we're over-tired or stressed due to problems elsewhere in our lives.

When we feel there's no relief from the pressure of living.

A certain level of anxiety is helpful and helps us deal with testing situations like exams but it can become an excessive nameless fear and that is anxiety disorder.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOURSELF

Here are some ideas which you might want to try to see if they help you to feel less anxious in the situations which make you anxious.

Let us assume you find yourself avoidably in a situation which makes you anxious - what can you do?

1. Breathing - notice your breathing, it's likely to have become fast and shallow. Slow it down. In your head say 1 - 2 - 3 pause 1 - 2 - 3 as you breathe in and out. Increase the count to 4 if you can. Practise counting your breaths in and out when you're not feeling anxious.
2. Relaxation - try lying down (or sitting comfortably) and relaxing whilst you count your breaths in and out. Several short relaxations a day will help you to feel calmer.
3. Take regular aerobic exercise (e.g. jogging) aim to raise the heart beat a little but don't do any weight-lifting or other load-bearing exercise.
4. Cut out caffeine (found in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate) to help you feel less 'edgy'.
5. Notice your thoughts in your anxiety-provoking situation (see next page for ways of challenging them)
6. Be easy on yourself - say 'No' to things when you feel over-loaded.

CHALLENGING THE THOUGHTS WHICH TRAP YOUR ANXIOUS FEELINGS

Can you reduce the level of stress by perhaps spreading things out over a longer period of time?

Can you reduce your exposure to stress by taking a short break and going away from the place where you feel anxious (e.g. your desk)?

Are there some more permanent changes you might want to adopt? Make a plan.

Set yourself more reasonable goals or prioritise and only complete what's reasonable whilst you're feeling anxious.

Can you delegate (or share) some of your workload?

Can you approach an anxious situation more slowly - think/plan first, then act?

Can you reward yourself for facing up to a situation which provokes anxious feelings?

