

Depression / Anxiety / Anger

These are often closely linked, and are underneath about the struggle to come to terms with unbearable feelings. Depression is retreat, a closing down that comes from a feeling of being overwhelmed, it's a sort of 'giving up'. Anxiety is often agitation from the fear of being overwhelmed, it disturbs our sleep and leaves us tense, reactive and exhausted. Anger is often a defence against hurt. All are about the sub-conscious process of keeping out of our awareness what we can't bear to face.

As a generalisation, introverts tend to towards depression, extroverts towards anxiety. Often both are present, but the underlying processes are the same.

Whether you are stuck in continuous or cyclical depression, anxiety or anger, it is possible to find a way through it.

How come we are like this?

We are like we are for good reasons! The innate wisdom of our subconscious has made the best job it could out of the circumstances we found ourselves in. Its first rule is the survival of the self and this is what we have done, survived the best way we could. No matter how 'mad' or 'bad' we feel, it is simply not true, we are just human beings coping in the best we can.

When we didn't have the resources to cope with life's difficulties, what happened was that our subconscious wisdom pushed those experiences, (pain, hurt, fear, distress, anger etc.) into a sort of "holding area" within us. This is the definition of 'trauma' in its widest sense (as both acute and multiple corrosive events), it's how we protect ourselves from being overwhelmed. (cont)

Fees

For individuals £35 - £65 for 60 mins

For couples £50 - £80 for 75 mins

I generally see people weekly, especially to start with.

How long will it take?

I work short term, medium term and long term. Everyone's situation, their needs and what they want from therapy, is very different, and can also change. So this is a hard question to answer. Through discussing your wishes and expectations in an initial session it is possible to make a rough estimate.

Contact:

Please feel free to phone me if you would like any further information.

If I'm not available, please leave a message and I will get back to you.

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Alternatively e-mail me at -
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Depression & Anxiety

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(cont) To make sense of this often meant blaming ourselves for the experience of being punished, criticised, hurt, afraid, attacked, neglected, abandoned, etc. Especially as children, blaming ourselves was more survivable than the terror of it being 'non-sense'. The result is a deeply ingrained feeling that we are bad. This is amazingly common.

Keeping all those powerful feelings out of awareness requires a lot of us, it diminishes what's left for living our lives. Also, as part of this process we had to split some of the connections between our head, heart and body in order to de-sensitise ourselves. So now we don't really know what we feel, our thinking is confused and our bodies are ignored and full of tension, or lethargy.

We were not aware that all this happened. It was instinctive survival, then through habit it formed the person we have become.

Further consequences

The other consequences of being like this come from having to maintain our avoidance of these buried 'emergencies' from ourselves and certainly from the world. The constant inner conflict and need to defend ourselves creates our insecurity and from this we create a "false self" to hide behind.

This explains our self-destructiveness, if we feel we are 'bad' we are not really worth caring about, we deserve to be punished. Unsurprisingly we lack self-confidence and self-esteem. It also explains our shame. Being 'bad' we learned to be ashamed of ourselves and this made us even more vulnerable to our sense of inadequacy being compounded by all the 'shoulds' and 'oughts' dumped on us by our parents, educators and society at large.

Despite our best efforts at defence, we inevitably have various 'buttons' that if pressed cause difficult reactions. They have labels such as criticism, insult, anger, neglect, being ignored, loss, etc. From our over-reaction to these 'buttons' we know that there is more going on than we know about. The fact that we then go into our 'victim mode', confirms this.

Again, generalising, introverts blame and attack themselves, feeling terrible about themselves they shut down and withdraw. Extroverts blame and attack the other or the world. They also feel terrible about themselves but go into anxiety and/or anger instead.

These 'buttons' are directly 'wired into' our original 'trauma', which we have not yet been able to face, and which still feel unbearable. This is why we react so strongly and with so much inner turmoil, even with panic attacks.

All sorts of substance misuse, addictions and compulsions are part of our efforts to deal with and avoid the pain inherent in all this.

So what to do?

The first step is always about simply seeing and acknowledging the truth of how we are. If you want to look and find a way out, then the next step is to see and understand more, through developing your self-awareness.

This is where therapy comes in, as it's hard to do this without help. Therapy provides a non-judgemental space where we can start to understand that we are not 'mad' or 'bad', that there is logic and reason behind the way we are. We can then start to see how our experience relates, or not, to the processes I have described here. This can give a glimpse that change is possible, we are not fixed.

Then there is the need to build some self-support by bringing into awareness more of our actual current experience. This comes from starting to re-connect our heart, head and body. By looking in detail at what we are feeling and how it affects our thoughts and body. By looking at our thinking and how it affects our feelings and body. And very importantly by sensing our body and our breathe, by feeling our tensions or lack of energy.

With this we can start to understand the structure of ourselves, we can start to connect how we are now, to our understanding about our conditioning. This enables us to move towards forgiving ourselves, we are not to blame for how we are.

We are though still responsible for ourselves and it is tough turning away from blaming others and the world, towards taking responsibility for our feelings.

Process of change

We change through our participation and commitment to this process of integration and growth, not through directly trying to change. Then, slowly, we notice changed has occurred.

The aim is to live ever close to the present moment. Again we have to work indirectly, by resolving all those defensive 'emergency' reactions that demand all our attention. Our subconscious wisdom, which includes our 'conscience' (our ability to know what's true and what's not), is always working hard to support us by trying to make the best meaning possible with the knowledge and understanding it has. Improving this is our job.

This clearing of the past leaves us ever freer to live in the present, to live a more spontaneous, enjoyable, satisfying and meaningful life.