

Depression / Anxiety / Anger

These are often linked; they are unconscious avoidance strategies to keep us from almost unbearable feelings. With depression it is defeatedness, a closing down that comes from a sort of 'giving up'. Anxiety is our fear of being overwhelmed, it disturbs our sleep and leaves us tense, reactive and exhausted. Anger is our instant unconscious defence against hurt. All are about the sub-conscious process of keeping at bay feelings we have not yet been able to face.

As a generalisation, introverts tend to towards depression, extroverts towards anxiety. Often both are present, but the underlying process is 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 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 did, we survived our trauma the best way we could. No matter how 'mad' or 'bad' we now feel, we need to not believe these feelings, they are just the hurt/pain expressing itself in the only way it can.

When we did not 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 (from both acute and multiple low-grade trauma events). It is how we protect ourselves from being overwhelmed. (cont)

Fees

For individuals £35 - £85 for 60 mins

For couples £50 - £120 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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Or visit my website for more information
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Depression & Anxiety

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(cont) As a child, to make sense of this, we blamed ourselves. To make some sense of these experiences we took in being punished, criticised, hurt, afraid, attacked, neglected, abandoned, etc., as being in some way our fault. We took in the blame. This was more survivable than the terror of it being caught in a world of 'non-sense'. But the result was 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 is left for creatively living our lives. As part of this we split the connections between our head, heart, and body in order to de-sensitise ourselves. So that now, we do not really know what we feel, our thinking is confused, and our bodies are ignored and full of tension, or lethargy.

All this happened automatically, it was instinctive survival, which then, through habit, formed the person we have become.

Further consequences

We then have to maintain our avoidance of this buried pain, hurt, fear or distress from ourselves and certainly from the world. The constant inner conflict and need to defend ourselves create a deep insecurity and from this we make 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. These are 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.

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, be it anger, panic attacks or shutting down.

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. Change needs to come from a twofold approach. Firstly, we need to enquire, look, see, and understand, by developing your self-awareness. But we also need to choose and commit ourselves to looking and facing.

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, that 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, be it ourselves, others, or the world, towards taking responsibility for our feelings. My feelings are mine!

Process of change

We change through our participation and commitment to this process of understanding, integration, and growth. We cannot change directly through "will-power". Gradually we notice that 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.