



Anne's story

Anxiety can sometimes blur the line between what's normal and what isn't. But when anxiety starts to affect your daily life, it could be the sign of something deeper going on.

Anne is 47 and from Cheshire.

"Twelve years ago, I started to have weird thoughts," says Anne.

"I'd drive to work and think that I was going to knock someone over, so I better stop driving. Or I'd have the worry of leaving something on in the house, to the point where I would have to drive home to check.

"I thought how I was feeling was normal. I told myself that everyone has these weird thoughts.

8 million people in the UK are experiencing an anxiety disorder at any one time. Yet, less than half of people with generalised anxiety disorder are accessing treatment.

Source: Mental Health UK and Mental Health Foundation, 2023

"I naively thought that people just use the 'mental health' label as something to blame their problems on.

"I kept seeing an advertisement for a helpline, so I called it and told them my symptoms. They told me I had significant symptoms of OCD and anxiety and that I urgently needed to be referred to a therapist.

Anne's diagnosis allowed her to better understand what she was feeling and why. Working with a specialist, she learnt how to manage her symptoms.

"Once the therapist diagnosed me, it felt like a weight had been lifted."

"Through working with the therapist, I realised the trauma of caring for my father from a young age has triggered my ongoing anxiety later in life.

"My therapist taught me techniques to help deal with some of my symptoms. She compared my breathing exercises to those who go out for a break at work. It's a way of de-stressing through controlled breathing. She told me to do this through a straw which helps to calm you down.

"She also taught me the self-tapping technique where you tap your shoulders when thinking about traumatic events, which is so grounding.

"The two main things that worked the most for me were, firstly, reading about anxiety and understanding how it works.

"The second thing is talking. You realise anxiety is something so common and you feel less isolated when being open about it."

Everybody's experience with anxiety is unique to them. A professional will be able to help you find the right treatment for you.

If you're looking to take a first step, or to continue exploring ways to manage anxiety, visit bupa.co.uk/health-information/mental-health

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