



Colin's story

It can be hard to talk about how you're feeling. Suppressing anxiety can often be misconstrued as addressing it, but recognising when to ask for help and opening up to others is a key step toward relief.

Colin is 52.

"I felt that I was a problem for everybody else. I was causing more problems than I was ever resolving," says Colin.

"I was a burden. Why did anybody want to spend time with me?"

"I always carried on regardless and used humour and sarcasm as a way of getting through things rather than actually addressing them.

"I was always that person that was just like: 'No, no, no, counselling is for other people.'

Making the decision to seek help isn't always easy, especially for those with feelings of inadequacy.

"I'd functioned at my capacity for so long, and I've never really addressed so many issues from childhood, like relationship breakdowns and being a foster parent, and just lots of things that build up. With all this triggering my anxiety, I felt that if I told people how I was feeling, I was going to make what I perceived to be a bad situation worse. And I defaulted to, 'If I can't cure it, why should I expect anybody else to?'"

"I didn't really feel I had any choice but to address it myself. But I realised that was not going to work, so I decided to try counselling.

Referrals for adults aged 65 and over to psychological therapies increased by 50 per cent between 2015 and 2020.

Source: NHS, 2021

Wider discourse around mental health has opened conversations around therapy and counselling. As a result, there has been a large increase in people from Colin's generation and above seeking help.

"Since counselling, I can definitely see the benefit in little wins," says Colin.

"Once one thing is done, you're more inclined to do the second thing and then the third thing and, before you know it, you've done loads and you're like, 'Hey, look at me!'"

"I own depression and anxiety. It doesn't own me."

"My anxiety might never fully resolve, but it's about how you cope and how you move on with it. I own depression and anxiety. It doesn't own me.

"If I can help one person to not go through what I went through, then job well done."

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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