

Been to hell and Back? The impact of coronavirus

Given the unique situation we all find ourselves in because of the world pandemic, it is understandable that many people are finding their mental health is not as healthy as previously. The Office for National Statistics recent report shows personal wellbeing scores for life satisfaction, feeling that things done in life are worthwhile and happiness remained at some of the lowest levels recorded since this survey began in March 2020; the anxiety score improved slightly this week compared with last week but only just, which leaves so many people still suffering with anxiety.



Winter can be a difficult time and is when seasonal depression, known as SAD, sets in. January is known for being the most depressing month, with the third Monday in January picking up the title Blue Monday, and no wonder since around this time of year the skies are grey, the air is chilled and more importantly, the sun is rarely seen. Thank goodness Spring is on its way and now is the perfect time to consider a mental health spring clean.

With the Government aware of the impact of the fluctuating lockdown is having on peoples' wellbeing, Public Health England launched "Every Mind Matters", a campaign to support the nations' mental wellbeing. This follows numerous articles and suggestions in the media with mental health tips that include: avoiding speculation, look for reputable sources for information, trying to stay connected (because at times of stress we are better with support), and look after your mental health while you stay at home as lockdown eases. Other sources of wellbeing guidance can be found on platforms such as YouTube and Eventbrite and these are a great support for many people.

For some people however, navigating their way through the diverse range of advice and wellbeing content is not easy when they are feeling anxious, overwhelmed and raw because they have been, or are still going, to hell and back. Whether your hellish journey has been caused by the pandemic or it started before any of us had ever heard of COVID-19, counselling can help you make sense of, and recover from, your experience. There are many ways or modalities of working that therapists are trained in. The Counselling Directory list an eye watering 40 types of therapy in their A-Z list.

So, for someone thinking about talking therapy; who do you choose and what therapeutic approach is best for you. It is part of human nature to try and make sense of life, others and ourselves and talking with an attuned therapist who not only seeks to understand your experience, but provides space for you to sort out your problems and pain without judgement, and provide a confidential and empathic working relationship where you can talk about things you might not be able to discuss with anyone else.

Therapists offer a free initial session to look at the issues on your mind and provide you the opportunity to get a feeling for how they work. It is wise to make good use of this genuine offer until you find the person you can build a therapeutic relationship within which you feel comfortable. This is so important, for you to feel safe and explore your own thoughts, feelings or

behaviours. Under the government's lockdown rules services relating to mental health are allowed to remain open although it has not provided any specific advice regarding counselling or psychotherapy. Some therapists continue to offer face to face sessions but many have moved to online or provide telephone therapy, while some offer a combination of options to their clients.

As you have read this far, I am curious what attracted you to this article. The title maybe, after all the impact this pandemic has had on mental health is undeniable. Anxiety, a feeling plaguing so many people right now, can be good when it helps us prepare and not be over confident. When anxiety is no longer normal is when our life is dominated by this emotion, when it penetrates our sleep, anxiety then is not good for us.

So, if anxiety can be normal, by the way, without this we would be become cold and calculating, how on earth do we get rid of the unhealthy anxiety that is blighting our lives. The answer is to better understand our own unique emotions including stress. I encourage you to make use of free initial sessions that therapists offer and find yourself someone where you can dismantle the cloud of anxiety you are sitting under to set yourself up for a much better year ahead.

About the author

Anne Davies is a qualified counsellor and experienced in working with people who want to change their emotional pattern of anxiety. To find out more about her visit www.mattersofemotion.co.uk.

Finding a therapist, someone you connect and feel comfortable with is crucial. Anne offers an initial free session so you have an opportunity to get a feeling for how she works. Email her at anne@mattersofemotion.co.uk