

My Real Experience With Mental Health | Nadiya: Anxiety And Me (Full Documentary) | Tonic

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Why am I making this documentary? Partly because i'm selfish because I want to get better and partly because

[0.14] Her anxiety

“I know that having anxiety is probably one of the most lonely, most isolating things to have because you are your own worst enemy. You live inside your head and I know there are thousands of people out there who suffer just like me. We need to talk and that's half the healing we need to talk”.

[0.39] [Music] I'm Nadiya Hussain and I've been living with extreme anxiety for as long as I can remember. It's something that I've always tried to hide. What people don't see is before I sit in front of a camera, nobody really sees what it took to paint on a smile and I think that's why people will watch this and be surprised.

(Book signing) Hi, how are you? Good, how are you? Good. I might seem happy and relaxed (Signing thank you so much) but that's not how I feel.

[1.11] Nadiya:

“That feeling of worry is always there, it's so heavy and it just doesn't go away. I can hear the beating of my heart in my chest, then it goes up to my head and then I have a panic attack. It feels like you're gonna die. Imagine what kind of a life you live if you worry about dying every single day. I think I have an anxiety disorder but I've never had a proper diagnosis so I don't know exactly what's wrong with me, or if I can get better.

So i've decided it's time to seek help what what's happening now tell me what's going through your mind i don't like that i'll undergo a course of therapy letting cameras record my progress so you would feel as if your life was in danger it's

that same feeling yeah in the hope of breaking down the stigma surrounding this crippling condition it's so really tense my mouth feels really terrible it's taking all of my strength to keep my head up with five million people in the uk diagnosed with anxiety disorders it seems anxiety is on the rise is there a pressure to be perfect oh yeah i'm going to explore how other sufferers are coping i do still get anxiety attacks and it's even whilst being on the even whilst on them yeah i'll investigate different treatments i'm scared i don't know where to go what to do you're actually okay you didn't die you didn't pass out and ask what can be done to help me and millions of others like me get better it's got to a point in my life where that's all i am now i'm just the panic i'm just the anxiety and i don't want to be that anymore [Music] i feel sweaty i feel really hot am i talking to you or am i talking to camera to to talk to the man um yeah suddenly all it all feels really real now like the mics on i wish i had the answers i don't have the answers and this is why i'm doing this i'm sweating so much oh my god my face is so hot i thought this was going to be really easy i thought i could do this okay anxiety is an emotion we all experience from time to time but the difference for me is that it's often an overwhelming feeling i can't control [Music] are you making uh brownies which is tough on me but also hard for my kids and my husband abdel can i have a cup of tea yeah sure seeing as you weren't gonna offer milk please milk no sugar no sugar thank you i worry about the most ridiculous things things that my mind doesn't need to be cluttered with i know that i worry about everything i can't even that's i worry about everything you name it i worry about it everything is a worry do you remember that time when we did a food shop and i needed coriander they substituted it for parsley and in what world is coriander anything like parsley i couldn't see past that and you remember i told you get the kids out of here because i didn't want them to see me have a panic attack that was quite scary when i saw that slightly ashamed i thought she was having a heart attack at the time i was so worried whatever it is it looked like something that needs an ambulance just give it a little mix until there's no flour at the bottom let me go find some eggs the only time i've actually really tried to work out what my anxiety feels like is when i when i knew that i had to explain it to my kids and i to me it's like a monster now some days it feels like the monster is so big it's so huge that it's in my face and i can't do anything because i can't see past it it's there screaming and shouting at me and it's just i can't do anything i can't function i can't move and i just stay in bed the only way i've found to stop my anxiety spiraling out of control is to distract myself by keeping busy i i feel less anxious when i have a

routine and i know what i'm doing and when i'm doing it so um can you tell me your routine like day to day yeah so go from the very beginning okay [Music] i try and start every day exactly the same way 5 5 30 just before the sun rises i get up and i'll pray once i've prayed come down give the kids breakfast 7 o'clock after dropping them off to school i'll go for a 5k walk and after i've finished my morning routine i keep my mind busy with my work for me cooking's a destruction baking's a distraction so i'll cook and bake a lot more than we can physically eat it's a vicious cycle i just keep doing it i keep doing it when anxiety hits i like to bake let me show you carrot cake coffee marble bun thingy some brownies and there's some salted caramel in the fridge despite all my efforts i still have regular panic attacks and i've decided it's finally time to do something about it i mean i think we should just look up i'm just gonna look up anxiety gonna look around yeah because we're not even sure if there's oh well we do it should we go to an nhs website then let's just do let's go to an nhs that's it i'm pretty certain i have an anxiety disorder but i've never been fully diagnosed looking online anxiety seems to be a general term for a range of disorders all of which share similar symptoms our symptoms and panic attacks symptoms include a racing heartbeat check definitely feeling faint check sweating nausea chest pain shortness of breath choking sensation check to all of those a feeling of dread or fear of dying everything to me that's one of the key ones yeah everything i do ends with i think we're going to die hmm it says if people would generalize anxiety disorder they don't remember the last time they felt relaxed would you really are you okay what are you thinking right now what's wrong what you it's thinking difficult to to kind of read about the fact that it's always like that and you're telling me it's always like that i've never asked yourself that question yeah i've never read those words in that sentence like that before that people with that don't ever feel relaxed and you agree with that yeah oh my goodness yeah do you think you want treatment i think so don't you you answered that very quickly no but for us think about it for the kids for me i'd feel much more you answer that question do you want me to get better of course why wouldn't i you have to take time out to give this a go isn't it i have to give it i have to give it a chance haven't i yeah i have to give it a chance having started looking i have more questions than answers why do people get anxiety disorders how big a problem is it and are any of the treatments effective [Music]

[8.53] Nadiya: “To find out I'm meeting David Clarke from the university of Oxford, the NHS's advisor on improving access to treatment for anxiety disorders.

[9.01] David: Anxiety disorders don't discriminate between people. Over 25 percent of us will experience an anxiety disorder at some time in our life.

Nadiya: So what is anxiety?

[9.11] David:

Anxiety is an emotion that we all experience when we are in a situation that we think is dangerous, and we're not sure whether we can deal with the danger. The problem is though if there isn't a real danger you're in a situation where you think it's dangerous and it's not, and that's when you start to develop anxiety disorders.

but anxiety disorders are poorly detected so if you take the other common mental health problem depression and you ask people who've got depression now has any professional ever spotted it it's about 70 percent um which is quite good but if you take anxiety disorders and you ask the same question it's only about 20 of people we know that whether it's people talking more or whether it's always been there but there is a rise in anxiety but treatment's improving too people are beginning to realize that there are psychological therapies that really help and the more people become aware of that the more people are willing to talk about it because it's one thing to talk about something if you think there's nothing can be done about it and you feel ashamed about it it's very different if you think well if i talk about it i can get good help and i can really overcome it so the two most effective treatments are medication and also cognitive behavior therapy which looks at helping people challenge their negative thoughts about how dangerous situations are but also change their behavior when that's maintaining the anxiety what i find encouraging talking to david is that there are effective treatments available i'm a little wary of medication so i've decided to start with a course of cognitive behavioral therapy or cbt i've been referred by a gp to a specialist in oxford i've been nervous for the last few days and i keep saying to myself well maybe you don't have to do it maybe you could just like avoid it for another three decades but i can't. [Music]

[11.12] Nadiya:

“Professor Paul Salkovsky will be my CBT therapist. In the first session of this structured therapy, Paul wants to assess the extent of my anxiety so next time we meet he can give me an exact diagnosis. This feels like a test I'm failing miserably, all of these are severe, all of them are severes. [Music]

[11.40] Nadiya: The fact that I'm finally sat here is quite a big deal for me. One of the things that stopped me - the only thing that really stopped me from ever seeing a professional - was the thought that somebody would say you're crazy, tie me up, stick me in a white van, and take my children away.

CBT: A lot of people with anxiety kind of consider that the anxiety itself might make them unfit to be a parent. Of course what anxiety does is it means that you're super sharp, and it's never a reason to take children away from parents. Okay can you tell me a bit about the most important ways it restricts your life, and perhaps damages your life?

Nadiya: I've stopped seeing any friends.

CBT: I'm sorry to hear that and does that make it all sad?

Nadiya: So yeah.

CBT: I don't see my friends anymore. I mean, my goodness.

Nadiya: Yeah, I don't have any friends anymore.

CBT: I don't have any friends?

Nadiya: No I don't have friends.

CBT: You don't have them or is it you don't see them?

Nadiya: No I don't have any friends.

Nadiya: Okay yeah. I use so much of my energy on just doing day-to-day stuff.

CBT: There's a lot of energy going into keeping an eye open for the anxiety and the panic. It's a permanent distraction kind of ,you're kind of constantly doing things which kind of holds the monster at bay - kind of thing.

[12.58] Nadiya: Monster

That's exactly what I call it, I call it my monster.

CBT: Were you a child who worried a lot or do you remember being worried?

Nadiya: I've had this feeling for as long as I can remember. I was bullied in primary school up until I left primary school.

CBT: What were you bullied about?

[13.16] Nadiya: dark

For being dark. They would wait in corners and pull chunks of my hair out till it was bleeding. They slammed my fingers in doors, and all of my nails eventually fell out because they were all black and blue. I think it was my last year of school, and they flushed my head down the toilet.

CBT: Did you tell your parents?

Nadiya:

No, they had lots going on. They were in and out of hospital quite a lot with my brother and sister who were really sick. So I just never said anything knowing that it would not be fair to go and tell them "mum i'm being bullied" or "mum this boy's hurting me".

CBT: Can you see that that might have set you up to be a bit worried later because there's a lot to be worried about?

Nadiya: That makes sense

Nadiya:

Narrating - That was hard, it was really hard talking about things that have happened in the past. Paul's doing something that's completely opposite to what I've been doing all these years. I've tried to kind of suppress it and dig deep, and like push it down. He's saying no let's talk about it a little bit more, now let's think about why that happened. and that's something that i haven't done ever [Music]

My past is in Luton where I grew up and where I started to suffer from anxiety. I'm a first generation British Bangladeshi, and I lived here until I was 20 with my five brothers and sisters.

this is your world this is it yeah this is my world it's changed a little bit since i was here last my sisters still live in the area hi only me let me in growing up although they saw how bad my anxiety was we never really talked about it hey hey oh look at my eyebrows [Music]

talking in therapy has made me realize that serious health issues in my family could have been one of the triggers for my anxiety as a child that's shaq that's our little brother and he is only a couple of days older when he was born i spent probably close to six months just watching his chest go up and down in the fear that he would just die both my youngest brother and sister had life-threatening diseases when they were born do you remember when i was like seven or eight and i'd get really emotional and start crying like even if like mum would go out somewhere really quickly nip out and we know she's had crosswords with dad and we're like oh she's never going to come back i used to take her to the extreme yeah you would be absolutely hysterical and i used to think i used to look at you and i think why is she doing that why is she doing that why does she have to be so dramatic that's the problem with having this i think about death in a kind of irrational crazy all the time kind of i remember saying to myself if i didn't repeat everybody's names before i fell asleep everyone would that whoever's name i didn't repeat a lot of pressure what i used to do is i used to have my fingers and i used to say mom dad did he let's just say rumi i said mom's dad you were doing at night i was did you ever see that this is me this was me i used to do this always what you do though i'm like why does she do that yeah and it's become a habit now even now i'm listening to you and i'm

thinking i'm telling me in my head i'm saying well some things you can't help like life and death that's not in our control why worry about it so much i can't help it though yeah i know this is it there's a voice in your head i can't help it and that to me it's like wow there's a voice in your head yeah what does a voice in your head sound like it tells you that you're not good enough it tells you that you're inadequate it tells you that you're a bad mother it tells you that you're the worst sister in the world it tells you that you're the most disappointing daughter that ever lived it tells you that you're an inadequate wife it tells you that you are not good if i told you nadia you are the best sister in the world forget about these two yeah you're the best sister in the world yeah you are everything that i could ever ask for in a sister is that not good enough i'd say you're lying or you're just saying it why'd you say you're just saying it to me like make me happy the thing is because of my anxiety i don't appreciate that any i can't appreciate the fact that i've got beautiful children an amazing husband a wonderful family sometimes i don't see it i think as her older sister i didn't realize how how deep it actually is the details in that when she was telling me about how she used to count down and names and things like that that blew my mind i thought really she actually does that how does one get through the day [Music] it's clear i was anxious from an early age so i want to know if this is something i was born with and if so could i and other anxiety sufferers like me pass the condition onto our children i'm afraid i've got three kids and i'm scared that i'm scared that they'll have it one of them will have it or all of them will have it and i hope it isn't genetic i don't want it to be genetic for the past 26 years at king's college london scientists have been conducting one of the largest twin studies in the world using cutting-edge research carried out on fifteen thousand pairs of twins they've been investigating the complex relationship between nature and nurture rosa and her sister margie have been part of the study since it began this is where they're doing studies so in this research center this is where the 20 sun is based as well as a lot of other studies. as well

[19.23] Nadiya: twins study

Narrating: As well as being a participant Rosa now works on the study conducting groundbreaking research into the role of genetics and environment on anxiety disorders.

Nadiya:

So this twin study you've both obviously been doing it, what information is it that they're trying to gather?

Rosa: It's banking on the fact that twins are a really neat natural experiment.

Nadiya: (Indignant) How does that make you feel?

Margie: A little bit like labrats sometimes.

Rosa: By comparing twins we can start to unpick how different traits are genetics. nnr

Nadiya: So nature, so nature and nurture.

Rosa: yeah.

[19.58] Nadiya: avoiding conditioning

This kind of brings me to my question because I suffer with anxiety. Is there an anxiety gene?

Rosa: That's the classic question that we always get asked and there absolutely isn't. Anxiety is influenced by loads and loads of genes, and all of them have quite small effects.

Nadiya:

It's not to say that it's genetic, you can't say whether it's genetic?

Rosa: Well we know that genes are important but they don't determine anything, and really importantly the environment - like within the family and schools - that's key as well. You'll pass on half of your genes to your children but that doesn't mean that they're necessarily going to have exactly the same experience of anxiety as you because they have got environmental differences as well.

[20.47] Nadiya: concluding nurture

Narrating: I've come away feeling quite good today, because there's no one out there saying to me that actually I can pass it on to my kids. But what I am hearing is that my environment, the nurture part, is the bit that I can control. That's the bit that makes me happy, because actually I'm going to do everything in my power for my kids not to get it.

It seems to me one of the best ways to do that is to treat my anxiety so it stops having such an impact on our lives. Today Paul will be giving me a diagnosis of exactly what type of anxiety disorder I have before starting my treatment.

[21.27]CBT: diagnosis

In the last session what we picked up was very clearly Nadiya has high levels of anxiety. At the forefront of this is the occurrence of panic attacks, and in the panic she thinks that something terrible is going to happen, that she's going to faint or die; i'm keen to focus on that.

Nadiya:

I want to know what I have but is it as clear-cut as that?

CBT So I think central to it is anxiety and panic attack is the most obvious sort of manifestation of that. That would meet the label of panic disorder - so you've got panic disorder. The bit that i'm not sure about is whether or not you actually have post-traumatic stress disorder because some of the things you described clearly haunt you. The good news is that panic is just about the easiest one to treat.

CBT So you can actually get rid of it?

CBT You can get rid of it. The research shows that eighty percent of people will be completely free of panic.

Nadiya:

So you're saying that I could not have panic but I could just be anxious like any other person.

CBT Be free of panic yeah. When you have a panic attack what do you do?

[23.37] Nadiya: breathing makes it worse

Well I know when I'm breathing really fast and rapid, I know that that's not how I'm supposed to breathe. So the first thing I do is try and control it. So I will breathe in through the nose out through the mouth.

CBT: Show me how you do that. What's happening with you? Keep doing it.

Nadiya: Makes you feel weirdly lightheaded.

CBT Keep going, keep going and

Nadiya:
A little bit sick sorry.

Nadiya:
That's fine, what else is happening to you?

CBT: So my heart feels like it's racing.

Nadiya: is this supposed to be helping?

CBT No no it's not supposed to be helping. I'm just picking out what you said you normally did in a panic.

Nadiya: This is what I normally do and it's making me feel worse.

CBT It makes you feel worse.

[23.36] CBT excitement

CBT At a time when you felt very excited, let's say when you got married. Do you remember that feeling of excitement, that feeling of intense excitement? How does it affect you physically when you're intensely excited?

Nadiya: Almost quite similar to when I'm having a panic attack.

CBT Almost or actually physically.

Nadiya: Yeah I don't feel like I'm dying then.

CBT no you don't what's the difference?

Nadiya: Feeling's the same.

CBT Yeah, the feeling's the same. The only thing is what it means to you. If you think it means that you're dying, hey guess what you feel anxious; if you think it means that this is the best day of your life you're full of joy. If that's the case then when you have a panic attack if you can be sure that nothing bad is going to happen, then what would that do to the anxiety?

Nadiya: I could stop it in its tracks.

CBT Yeah well I think it wouldn't happen in the first place.

Nadiya: It wouldn't happen.

yeah yeah it'll probably take a break at this point i think we're not quite done but i think this would be a good time to take a break yeah you know every time i have a panic attack and you say in through the nose out through the mouth and we breathe lovely and deep and deep back out you know that makes it worse because that's like almost you're almost feeding it and i literally was on the edge you know like when i'm on the edge of an attack.

[24.50] CBT tathata - confronting the fear

CBT One of the things I was looking for is an activity that we could do to actually confront the fear. It's not about controlling breathing, it's about discovering that the thing she's afraid of the fear is unjustified essentially.

[25.09] Powerful CBT confronting the sink

What I'm keen to do is to try it again. Actually now take it to where she might feel panicky and confront it.

Z CBT gets Nadiya to deep breathing repeatedly. [Music]

CBT It's building up now. Okay do a bit more. It's quite predictable interestingly. The same kind of thing is going on here. You've got the heart going fast.

Z Nadiya is suffering. She shakes her head from side-to-side, tears are starting.

CBT What's happening now? Tell me what's going through your mind.

[25.45] Nadiya:

I don't like that feeling.

CBT Of course you don't, nobody likes that feeling in this context. What's going through your mind apart from not liking the feeling? I'm just wondering if it brings back any memories.

[26.01] Nadiya: hiding under the sink

It reminds me of that moment. It always reminds me of that moment when I was hiding under the sink, and my head was flushed down the toilet. Because that's how I was breathing.

CBT I'm guessing that when your head's in the toilet you can't breathe as well.

Nadiya: I was breathing in a lot of water.

CBT yeah which of course could have killed you.

Nadiya: yeah.

CBT So you would feel as if your life was in danger it's that same feeling yeah. So although you're not actually thinking you're gonna die, it's reminding you of a time when you thought you were going to die.

Nadiya: yeah

CBT It's really important to remember that that was then and this is now, that what happened then it's not ever going to happen to you again. I think there's a little bit of an echo of that coming through in panics as well because of that difficulty breathing.

How's the physical feelings now?

Nadiya: I feel fine it's fine okay.

[27.00] Nadiya narrating the sink

Narrating - I still have that memory of the water going up my nose and feeling like if they don't pull me up now I am going to drown with my head in this toilet; knowing that i'm breathing in water and urine and all of that. They eventually stopped and they left me. I hid under the sink and I breathe I remember breathing really hard and I had a panic attack - that was my first ever panic attack. [Music] But that memory stays with me. That memory is going to stay with me forever; if I could erase my memory then I would take that one memory out of my head because that memory is always there.

[28.01] CBT assessment

It's become evident that there's two problems; they're separate but interlinked - frequent panic attacks which amount to panic disorder but also the bullying trauma.

the idea is the next session will actually get control of the panic so that she can then more effectively deal with the traumatic stuff the flashbacks and re-experiencing she's got if my traumatic experiences as a child show anything it's that we need to deal with anxiety as early as possible and government figures back that up the biggest rise in anxiety in recent years is amongst teenage girls and young women

hove park secondary in brighton is one state school trying to tackle the issue head-on welcome to what do i need to do to get in thank you the school has prioritized mental health trying to prevent anxiety becoming a serious problem by encouraging students to talk openly teachers are trained to spot the early signs of anxiety and pupils have access to dedicated therapy rooms and counsellors what kind of stuff makes you need to come in here like well maybe if i'm getting like wound up like about something maybe like some work might be a bit hard to get a bit wound up about it and then i'll come up and just chill and then maybe we could do the work come back to listen okay kind of a bit of a safe space is what we try and say is that it's somewhere that you can go where you whatever kind of behavior you're feeling at that time or emotion you're feeling you can get that out and we're not kind of going to judge you or sanction you it's about having that space to breathe and that's a that's a great place to be right that you recognize that you need to come to the hub you're like right i need a minute please yeah and then you come up chill and then maybe go back to listen and carry on with wherever you're in and does it feel better when you go back yeah you're very lucky do you feel lucky yeah i feel lucky and they are lucky because outside of this school some children with mental health issues are waiting over a year to be treated we're going to talk about this afternoon worry and anxiety and what happens but here talking about anxiety and the pressures students face has become part of everyday school life i've heard the word perfect quite a lot yeah is there a pressure to be perfect everyone's supposed to be a certain way like and people expect you to be perfect basically social media basically impacts everything to us now and like before you post a picture you're like worried what's everyone else gonna think what comments am i going to get can you think about everyone else's opinions before you think about your own the difference i think for you guys and for us is that growing up i could just go home and there was no yeah i didn't have a mobile phone but you guys have that added pressure of you can't leave school behind how do you find that i really

wish i was born in 1980 oh yeah you do yeah you do it was a good time just i talked to my nan about all the time i'm just like life would just be so much easier you wouldn't have to deal with like social pressure like just people editing pictures and you're like oh she has such clear skin i want that oh her figure is so nice i want that like it just you wouldn't have that pressure listening to you like you should definitely give yourself more credit for the stuff that you are having to kind of bat off and navigate because like nadia said some of those things weren't around for us they just weren't there so you've got a whole new set of um things to kind of find your way through and you're doing an amazing job the mental health provision here is obviously having a really positive effect but head teacher jim roberts has to deliver it without any additional funding we've had to prioritize we've had to make some tough decisions about things that we're going to resource and things that we're not going to resource as a head teacher you decide where your priorities are you decide the cultural ethos you want in your school and you have the autonomy to make that happen and that's what i wanted for this school i know that if this service was available for me when i was a teenager i can guarantee that i would have used it and i know that i would have said something and i know how much it would have helped me going into adulthood you know this is hope right yeah the level of care given to these pupils means they stand a better chance of avoiding the kind of anxiety i've suffered from since i was at school but the experience of being at hove park has also made me realize how deep rooted my condition is so i've decided to investigate the other recommended treatment medication but i'm cautious because i've tried it once before when i was 26 i had my daughter and i went to the doctors and i was given medication for depression and with very little explanation as to what the medication was for how i would feel and you know just what to do going forward so i had the medication for two weeks and didn't that was it for me that i just decided that i can't deal with having no emotions whatsoever but now [Music] now i'm almost considering it i've been looking online for other people's experiences of taking anxiety medication and i found blogger and journalist laura bartley who also has panic disorder like me laura lives in a rural part of wales she's been on an nhs waiting list for cbt therapy for 14 months and last year she turned to medication what are you on at the moment so that's the oh so that's the that's the serotonin yeah the ssri there are a number of different types of medication used to treat anxiety and the most popular are the type laura is now taking antidepressants called ssris or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors serotonin so yeah you hear that that word to me is that says

happy right serotonin and chocolate when you took the medication was it as easy as right i'm having this medication i feel better already how did your i suppose how did you how did your body take it because mine didn't like it no it was not easy at all everyone reacts to it so differently and everyone has different side effects what were those horrendous side effects for the first two weeks i felt constantly sick and my anxiety was just at a level that i haven't experienced it for a long time it was just relentless worrying from the second i woke up to the second i went to sleep at what point did you think oh hold on a second i'm not feeling sick anymore uh it was about a month really yeah gradually i was realizing that i wasn't finding things as difficult as i found them before do you think the medication was the big turning point for you it has been a big turning point nothing seems so extreme anymore there's no extreme anxiety no extreme panics but i do still get panic attacks i do still get anxiety attacks and it's even whilst being on the phone even whilst on them yeah so i'd say they're definitely not it hasn't cured me it's not like a fix but you've found something that works for you yeah it wasn't easy no you're in a better place yeah definitely in a much better place now speaking with laura has made me realize that i didn't know enough to make an informed decision when i was first prescribed antidepressants eight years ago so i'm going to see local psychiatrist dr mirza mohammed to get some professional advice about anxiety medication do you know what ssris mean no basically what they do is they they prevent the breakdown of serotonin in our brain right which is a very important neurochemical and it is associated with our mood our motivation our feelings of you know happiness and and that's how people tend to sort of get some improvement in their symptoms i was given medication uh for depression when i was 26 and i took it for two weeks and actually without the doctor's advice i just came off them so i mean the word explained to you that you know those drugs are also licensed to be used for anxiety were they explained to me no absolutely not i mean a lot of these problems could be solved if patients had an extra couple of minutes at their gps where they can actually say oh you know what this is what i'm worried about can i speak about this and the gp had enough time yeah i think that's where i think a lot of resources are required so that you know these things they're better explained and but they take time yeah but i mean i think if a doctor doesn't communicate what that medication's for then you know a patient certainly isn't going to be brave enough to ask the question because when you're in a situation where you're already vulnerable surely that's just adding to the problem as opposed to again i think if i want to go through

each and every important side effect and go through consent form it might take me you know 15 minutes in a consultation rather than a you know five minutes yeah [Music] it's clear medication can play an important role in managing anxiety but i'm still looking for a long-term solution and since i'm only three sessions into my therapy i want to give cbt a real chance having identified the root cause of my anxiety paul wants to put that to one side for now and concentrate on controlling my panic attacks if i don't keep busy i give it room to he's asked me to listen back to our previous session so i can think about the things i do to control my anxiety it's made me realize that plans and routines dominate every part of my life even when i do my laundry um once i've done it everything is in color order so i've got black white cream gray red orange yellow green blue pink there's no other way but for me there's something about having everything in color order that's like the clarity makes me feel so good [Music] even living in milton keynes seems to help i like structure i like routine and milton keynes suits my life you know it suits the way i live it kind of gives me that structure that order a to b if you look at milton keynes as a whole it's like a grid system and there's something very satisfying about those grids there's no like curly wurly lines anywhere it just it suits me because i know exactly where i'm going from point a to point b and everything takes nine minutes and i love roundabouts i think they're great there's no traffic anywhere ever

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[38.58] CBT train

CBT to camera: Nadiya is constantly trying to keep her anxiety in check by obsessively following routines, and trying to keep herself occupied at all times. We'll be exploring today how these safety-seeking behaviours can actually keep the anxiety going even though it appears that they're keeping it down.

Nadiya to camera: I'm feeling quite anxious today. I don't know what to expect from each session. I like plans. I like to know exactly what's happening. First time I'm doing anything where I don't have a plan, it's just kind of like - this is what we're doing and that's scary for me.

CBT I'm really really keen to try and get you to introduce an element of randomness in your life.

Nadiya: Okay.

CBT I'm not saying "Nadiya stop planning things" but I'm saying now "Stop planning everything to within an inch of it's life.

Nadiya: I can but I'm scared that I can't.

CBT Okay but what I'm saying is "this is all part of the control makes me feel less anxious whereas in fact I think it's controlling you". Your anxiety bullies you into "you must do it that way", "you've always got to know where you are", "you've always got to know what's happening next" and so on.

that's obviously got to do that if you don't do that then i'm going to get you yeah it's the voice in my head okay so if you wanted to deal with the panic what might you need to do face a panic attack strangely enough i've come to the same conclusion yeah i was thinking that

[40.17] Nadiya decides on train

CBT We should go looking for situations which may make you feel panicky. Can you think of a situation where "I'll do anything but I can't do that".

Nadiya: When I have to get on a train; that's quite frightening, that's quite scary. Just the thought of going on a train on my own makes me feel sick.

CBT Okay so so now we're going to go and be impulsive on the train.

[40.36] watch a lovely scene where Nadiya showed anxiety about the train

Nadiya: We're not are we? mm-hmm are we actually going to go on a train yes that was the idea now yeah yeah that was the idea i'm wanting you to try to get the panic going so we can flatten it okay is it are we really going to go to london now third time you've asked me that okay fine i guess we're going to london i hope he's got a plan because i don't because you know where we're going okay we're fighters about you obviously don't know either does it matter are you good with plans do you need plans i'm sorry yes so you're getting anxious too yeah

[Music] my heart's racing a little bit what is it you're worried about i don't like not knowing where i'm going so if you could just let that happen let your heart pound okay and and i mean this is really important you you need to be able to discover that either something happens or nothing happens nothing will happen but it's all very well for me to say that but it's you that needs to discover that okay okay we can cross over just having that voice in your head telling you that you're not good enough and that you can't do this and remember you're going to have a panic attack and everyone's going to see that everyone's going to know that you're weak and everyone's going to know that you're sick those are the voices in my head so where are we going london paddington delayed transformers this is why i don't like not planning things a lot of what we do in in treatment and a lot of what she needs to do is to discover how the world really works as opposed to how she fears it might work what she fears might happen what we're seeing um is the whole range of safety seeking behaviours so she for example is avoiding looking at other people looking at her feet she's doing a whole range of things which are designed to stop her from panicking to keep the anxiety at bay and so on but which are actually making it worse the hope is to get her not to do those things and then see that our anxiety will actually begin to diminish but the closer i get to the train the more i feel the panic rising inside me okay so many tents my mouth feels really tender okay well yeah that's it but that's it's okay to have it to be tense it's but you know you know it's unnecessary you know yeah it seems unnecessary like the looking down is unnecessary it's almost like you're repeatedly telling yourself i'm an anxious person you know yeah and you know what you don't absolutely don't have to be no and so some of it is about you're just not going to give in to the anxiety look down do this do that it's taking all of my strength to keep my head up [Music] yep oh okay thank you it's all right it's not as bad as i thought it was going to be never is [Music] here you are headed to london and it's not as scary as i thought it was going to be is it scary you told me at the moment this moment i don't think it is carrie i think and you know and and if you were to panic now if you were to have a panic attack well then he would go away it would go away you don't need to say this is me saying that i'm not when it happens i'm not going to force it to go away it will just go away it will just go away because there's nothing to be afraid of [Music] this is unfamiliar for me this is not something i do i was not expecting to be here today and here i am you know for sure you can do it now i know i can do it yeah and we've still got a bit of work to do yeah guys let me show you look look i came to trafilgar square [Music] and look i'm not dead not

dead or anything yay today has been life-changing i've done things i never thought possible and i'm starting to realize just how valuable this treatment is but i'm also aware i'm incredibly lucky because there are lots of sufferers who are undiagnosed or not getting professional treatment what if i can't do it i'm getting like cold sweat right okay so what i would say to you is you're going to have to expect that the anxiety is going to manifest but the difference is as you've been learning i've been looking online at what else is out there for anxiety sufferers oh god what am i doing what you're doing is great i mean it's definitely i've come away from the nhs website a little bit and there's lots of stuff online these self-help groups and there's this thing i've come across run by this guy called barry and it's like this community of people who like a live stream thing where you can go off and you could do something and like kind of push yourself but you've all but you've always constantly got a community of people who um who talk to you and encourage you see i'm getting like flashes of panic scared though i don't know where to go what to do you're actually okay you didn't die you didn't pass out none of those horrible things you thought would happen happened and you're proving that to yourself right now by standing there in the shop barry a former anxiety sufferer is one of a number of people running online self-help groups offering an alternative to nhs therapy for a price are you trained in any way all of the everything i write and everything comes from my own personal experience so it's very much about my personal experience of how i overcame my anxiety and then i'm connecting people with other people who are using that same approach trying to build up this peer-to-peer environment where people with anxiety can connect with each other working together and supporting and inspiring each other i mean how many subscribers how big is your community we have about a quarter of a million people who we communicate to over social media media and through our emails and it's growing all the time as i said earlier anxiety is this problem and people are becoming more aware of it and so they're searching out solutions online i mean i know that there's a struggle it's not that easy to get access to cbt but why do you think people are why do you think people are turning to this form of therapy i suppose there's still the stigma of going to a therapist and having that help people are afraid of doing that and there's also some people are afraid to talk to their doctor about it even so going online doing some research finding these communities is a great way or great introduction for people into that world you can absolutely whilst i'm unsure if online communities like this are as beneficial as nhs therapy what is valuable is that they encourage people to

open up and realize that they are not alone i always talk about how important it is to share and to talk and that is part of the healing i hope that people see that actually it's not that scary and you know who knows even if just one person picks up the phone to their gp and says you know what i'm going to call my gp because if average nadia can do that then so can i

[48.55] Nadiya reflecting on treatment

It's been seven days since I caught the train to London with Paul. Despite how well the treatment has been going, now I'm back at home - without him to help me - my anxiety is taking hold again.

Abdal (husband) [Music] It's one of those things where I think the doctor asked her to just all of a sudden go to London by herself, the underground, she did it, she called us; we were really proud of her. You know it was like a really good moment, high moment.

Abdal: Then literally a day or two later something else - life threw another problem, and she couldn't cope with it. I think that really dropped her from a high to very low. She was crying in a corner at one point and she would not get herself up. I think she feels quite dejected now as in "it's not going to work, I'm not going to find the cure", because she felt so good and then literally a day or two later she felt really bad and I think that's really worrying her.

what can i do i mean if you think about it what do i do i'm just there isn't it but as an aide to you i don't know how to help you that's you know that's i do not help me either because sometimes i've seen rather than facing the problem you'll cook for two weeks ahead yeah you clean everything that's available to clean you'll iron everything everything and you and i'm always i'm always coming to you and i say can i do that but those things help me to be distracted and they help me to kind of function as normally as people kind of hiding from it yeah i think maybe you need to let go of control not letting me just do it but just accepting the consequences of letting me do it like that time i accidentally burnt your top with the iron why are you so bad at everything i'm not you just are you're just a perfectionist oh you're so bad at everything you're like bad at cooking you're bad at ironing you're bad i'm not that bad at ironing what do you do do you want to make lunch you could make an omelette i'm not going to tell

you oh my god see i did it yeah whoa i'm not going to say anything okay go do whatever you want i'm doing it yeah i have never sat here and watched you do anything there go for it time now oh lord this is going to be painful where's the knife and idea i'm joking there's a salmon pie here you can't that's ready made you can't even touch that oh sometimes when you're going away on a weekend job you'll spend thursday friday cooking five meals what would happen if you didn't i've never done that before no but it would be okay wouldn't it we'd work it out me and the kids what would you feed him i don't need to tell you i'm their dad no but isn't it you need to let go of that control whereas i watched my curiosity i won't even tell you what curiosity what would you feed me no i don't know i'll work it out this is going to be difficult for you i better taste it quick myself then i know i don't know can i have that little corner because i can see a chili you want the chili i want that chilli corner look there's a chilli there.

[52.21] Nadiya questioning treatment

Nadiya: Narrating - Even with Abdal's support I can see that getting better is going to be hard and I'm starting to wonder if therapy really is the answer. I've had these sessions with Paul and he's teaching me how to manage my panic attacks or at least understand my panic attacks at the moment. But over the last two days the way I felt, I have questioned the CBT. I have stepped back and thought "is this even working because what I wanted was a cure?" What I wanted was somebody to say "Right that's it, it's gone now; you're never going to have it ever again".

um but i mean he could be wrong i mean he could be wrong at the moment i'm feeling like he might not he might be wrong i'm at the moment i'm feeling like i'm not going to it's not going to go away

[53.08] Nadiya confronting CBT

Nadiya: I don't know where I am at the moment. I feel stuck in the middle somewhere. I've met people who have said:-
"Well you have panic disorder and this is kind of something that you live with. You learn to manage it but you live with it for the rest of your life, and that's it."

and i don't want to and you don't agree no more than that yes i mean not only did i agree a i've seen it not be true eighty percent of people who who have you know the appropriate therapy are panic free i mean panic free you say 80 i could be that 20 where i still have to yes except you're not because of what you've already managed to do i suppose my frustration over the last few days has been that i want this kind of i want this instant fix and i know that thanks a lot though because because i mean there's multiple things going on here you know what i've been focusing on is is is the panic because that's what brought you through the door kind of thing right there's also this trauma issue that's something that you'll be working on for the rest of your life that for me was the thing that made me realize that this isn't going to be easy and this

[54.14] CBT final assessment

It was never going to be easy, it's still like being really clear about what you need to do. CBT is not me doing things to you. It's "we talk, you take something from that, and then you apply it". If it works you stick with it and if it doesn't work we'll work out what needs to be done. But it's about self-help, it's about actually you taking control. What I've seen is that you have begun the process of taking control.

Nadiya: If the success of the treatment is ultimately about helping yourself then I need to start trying things on my own - without Paul, facing my fears to overcome them like I did on the train to London.

so where better to start than in front of an audience of 2000 at the nec in birmingham [Music] in the past i've managed to cope with these big cooking shows by not wearing my glasses my fear has always been if i can see the audience i'll have a panic attack today i'm doing something that is that breaks that pattern and the pattern for me was to not wear my glasses and today i'm breaking that pattern and saying i'm going to wear my glasses so that for me and that in itself is a massive challenge for me [Music] [Applause] i can't see their faces i know as soon as i put my glasses on okay it'll be fine i can do it just glasses just people just faces it'll be fine [Music] in front of your very eyes please be hands together massive applause [Applause] one of the things that i just kind of wanted to say before i started cooking i'm doing a documentary about mental health and i suffer with mental health issues which i've been really

open and honest about i've recently learned that there's certain things that i do that are called safety seeking behaviors and i do them to protect myself one of the things i do is i don't ever wear my glasses because then i can pretend like nobody's here so today for the first time i'm going to break that sequence and i'm going to wear my glasses boom i said you're going to see me look at me i can see everyone oh my gosh look i can see all your faces that's hard you guys are good looking people let's just crack on i think we should just cook indeed yeah what are you gonna be cooking for us because i know you've got a couple of dishes.

[57.04] Nadiya: Conclusion - no cure

Nadiya:I came into this thinking that I wanted a cure, I wanted to be fixed. I know now that it's not a cure I'm looking for. It's not a cure because it's not that kind of illness. I have to find a way of managing, and I have to find a way of living like this but without all the things that make me sad. I know my treatment isn't finished, I know I've got a long way to go but I feel ready for it. I already see little glimmers - little little glimmers .

[Music] so i know there's hope