

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Reaching out can feel overwhelming, but finding a counsellor or therapist can help. Therapy can assist us to get to know ourselves better and become our own good friend. We then make choices that help manage conditions.

Choose someone you feel comfortable talking to. Online and telephone options are available too.

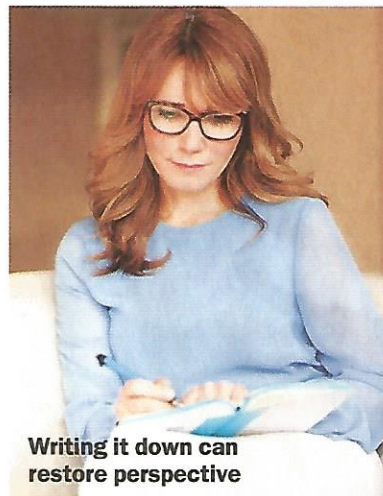
The directories of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (www.bacp.co.uk), UK Council for Psychotherapy (www.ukcp.org.uk) and British Psychological Society (www.bps.org.uk) make finding a registered, accredited counsellor or therapist easier.

If you're concerned about a loved one, they'll probably need to speak to a counsellor themselves. You can help them research the options available.

A favourite smell (teabag or essential oil on tissue, perhaps) can calm us down. So can a long, deep exhalation and strong movement – running, push ups, sun salutations or a walk.

"Research is now demonstrating a clear association between changes in our gut bacteria and cognitive behaviour," says Natalie Lamb, nutritional therapist at Bio-kult.com.

"Multi-strain probiotics have been shown to improve mood disorders such as anxiety, depression and SAD."



Writing it down can restore perspective

"Keep a diary"

"I suffer from really bad anxiety," says Cassy. "I have a son with a chronic condition and, in the lead up to surgery, I often become anxious. I have taken anti-anxiety medication.

"I practise meditation, keep a gratitude journal and try to keep things in perspective. I write about it on my blog to reach out to others who also feel this way. I try to be kinder to myself. As a friend said, I am not Wonder Woman so I should give myself a break from time to time."

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Anxiety UK (www.anxietyuk.org.uk) deals with various anxiety and panic issues. As well as magazines and factsheets, members can access low-cost counselling in their area.

Peter Levine's *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* helps readers understand what's happening physiologically as well as ways to work with it themselves and in therapy.

Dr Dina Glouberman's *The Joy of Burnout: How the End of the World Can Be a New Beginning* doesn't imply that recovery is easy or fast. Like post-traumatic growth, it can take a long time and it's not for everyone.

Executive coach Gabrielle Blackman-Sheppard wrote *Bi-polar Girl* as part of her own therapeutic process. It's an unusual look at her own experience of living with bipolar and her site offers additional resources www.bi-polargirl.com.

Mind www.mind.org.uk offers a range of online resources including low-cost counselling via your local organisation. Some branches also run self-help groups and support those worried about loved ones' mental health.



Make notes of what you want to say

How To Get The Most Out of Your GP Appointment

Your GP can diagnose you and point you in the right direction. This will usually be CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). This can be wonderful but is not for everyone. They're often also usually short-term arrangements.

GPs can also prescribe, when appropriate, antidepressants and other medication. To get the most