

Hello, I'm Amy Huberman, and I want to share with you a little bit about my approach to helping people get their lives back from anxiety and OCD.

First, I want to say that if you find yourself pinned into a corner by anxiety or OCD and feeling stuck, my heart goes out to you. I've been there myself. And from personal experience, I know how unhelpful it is when friends and family say things like, "just take it easy," or "just stop worrying!" Often, the things we're worried about are tied to our deepest values, like keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe, doing the morally correct thing, living up to our own high standards, or earning the friendship and respect of others. When we're told to "just stop worrying," it feels like we're being told to stop caring about the very things that matter most to us!

Second, I know firsthand how real it can feel that our worst fears are happening right now, or are about to happen, or could happen any time. We can feel it in our bodies. We can see it playing out vividly in our mind's eye. Our sense of dread convinces us fully that we are doomed. At the same time, I also know firsthand how what seemed so real in one moment can lose all its power in an instant—like the moment you awake from a nightmare and realize that it was all just a dream. I'd like to invite you to come with me on a journey that will awake you from the scary dream of anxiety or OCD. There are lots of possible ways to get there, and I'm excited to explore them with you, until you can navigate your own way there!

I want you to know that recovery from anxiety is possible. This is true even when your suffering has been prolonged and severe. It's also true whether you're struggling with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Social Anxiety, Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety, PTSD, a phobia, or some other form of anxiety that doesn't fit easily into a diagnostic category. If anxiety has taken over your life, it is possible to get your life back. You can absolutely do it. At the same time, there is a price to pay. You'll have to be willing to examine and explore your thoughts and feelings, even when they're painful, and to try out new behaviors, even when they're scary. I want to be clear that this is not a passive sort of therapy, but it is a highly effective one.

Let me say a little more about why I've chosen to offer intensive treatment, rather than continuing to meet with individuals just once weekly, as I did for more than a decade. I've observed that recovery from anxiety happens in two ways: one is through sudden shifts in perspective, and the other is through changing old habits that feed anxiety. In most cases, shifts in perspective must be accompanied by behavioral changes in order to achieve a full recovery. In the past, when I met with people for a single hour each week, I found that it was easy for us to lose momentum in our work together from week to week. At the end of the hour, we'd be just on the verge of that moment of insight and epiphany, and the session would end. In addition, most people found it quite challenging not to slip back into old ways of doing things between sessions; and one hour weekly of trying out a new behavior isn't enough to make a difference. This makes a lot of sense! It's just like showing up to piano lessons for an hour each week but not practicing at all between lessons. It's simply not enough practice to make beautiful music!

I believe that that's why I've had much more success when I work with individuals more frequently, for several hours at a time, and on top of that, ask them to do homework and practice new skills on their own after each session. Just as immersion in a new language greatly speeds up the learning process, so does immersion in a new way of relating and responding to anxiety or OCD greatly speed up your mastery of it. My hope is that by the end of our brief time together, you'll become your own guide on this journey, and you'll no longer need me to show you the way.

You may be wondering whether this approach will work for you. If you're struggling with a drug or alcohol addiction or using drugs like benzodiazepines to avoid feeling anxious, this treatment is unlikely to work for you until you give up the drugs or alcohol. However, once you do, there's no reason why it should not work for you, if you're willing to engage fully in the treatment, including doing the homework and practicing new skills between sessions. As a psychiatrist, I know that certain medications or medical conditions can cause anxiety, and if I suspect that this may be the case for you, I will explain this clearly to you and will refer you to another doctor who can help with this. Because we'll be working together for such a short time, I won't be prescribing medications to you, nor do I think they're necessary for our work together to be successful; but if you have questions about pharmacologic or medical aspects of your treatment, I'd be happy to share my recommendations with you and your other doctors.

In short, if you're willing to commit fully to going on this journey with me for the sake of getting your life back from anxiety, I'd love to work with you! You can give me a call or follow the link on my website to request a free 30-minute screening. You also can find more information about my practice on my website.

I look forward to hearing from you!