

## Are You Battling Depression Or Anxiety?

Have you been feeling tired, distracted, or on edge for seemingly no reason? Do you spend most of your day rushing from task to task, then struggle to let go of your mental to-do list when you go to bed? On the other hand, maybe you are sleeping too much but, nonetheless, find it difficult to get out of bed in the morning.

Have you experienced a shift in your eating habits or weight? Your busy schedule might leave little time for preparing healthy meals, or you may have simply lost interest in eating. Conversely, you might snack continuously or gorge yourself on comfort food when you're anxious or depressed. You might also have developed a fondness for alcohol, especially if you're a frazzled parent and/or busy professional.

If you've been feeling stressed out, sad, or otherwise unfulfilled, everything from your physical health and personal relationships to your career may be suffering. You may be procrastinating, making mistakes, missing deadlines, or passing up opportunities at work. You might also be increasingly experiencing domestic problems, such as frequent fights with (or a distancing from) your spouse, partner, or children.

Depression and anxiety often go hand in hand, putting many people onto what feels like an accelerating, downhill slide. Numbing out with alcohol or other substances (or fighting fatigue by drinking huge amounts of caffeine) might work for a while. But over time, shortcuts like these end up hurting you more than they help, leaving you even more exhausted, frustrated, and hopeless than before.

You might wonder why it seems like you are spiraling out of control when everyone else is doing fine. But in reality, you're not the only one who's struggling.

## Adults Today Are Under Tremendous Pressure

About [six percent of US adults have experienced frequent anxiety](#) and [seven percent have experienced major depression](#) at some point in their lives, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Moreover, more than half of all people with severe anxiety [also report symptoms of depression](#), according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Why are depression and anxiety so common? From an existential perspective, we long for many things that are difficult to obtain (strong relationships, a sense of purpose, a clear life direction, etc.), and we also fear aspects of life we can't avoid (loss, death, etc.). Even when we manage to accomplish what society tells us is supposed to make us happy—such as getting married, buying a house, or starting a family—we, nonetheless, often end up disappointed and unfulfilled. (Learn how [existential-humanistic therapy](#) can help with existential funks and crises.)

The gradual disappearance of the middle class and the growing cost of living is also incredibly stress-inducing. This is especially true for those of us living in San Jose, where the median cost to buy a home is a whopping [\\$1.2 million](#). The “always on” workplace culture in the Silicon

Valley is causing many of us great harm. It isn't healthy for us to work such long hours, take work home, and skip vacations just to make the monthly mortgage payment.

The working culture of the Bay Area often takes away from family time, sleep, and self-care, putting relationships at risk and even making some couples vulnerable to infidelity. Worse yet, according to psychologist [Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs](#), the financial insecurity many people face typically prevents them from pursuing the creative endeavors that would provide purpose and fulfillment.

Many of the factors that cause depression, anxiety, and other common difficulties are outside of our control. Fortunately, though, how we respond to these stressors is entirely up to us. With the support of a therapist, it is possible to make the most of difficult situations and despite the challenges, find a sense of peace and contentment.

## How Individual Therapy Can Ease Depression And Anxiety

Individual therapy provides an opportunity to explore the underlying causes of your difficulties. Once we've ruled out any underlying physical causes (for which I would refer you to a psychiatrist or your physician), we will uncover the psychological sources of your distress. Through the process of elimination, we'll zero in on the sources of stress and sadness that are causing you the most discomfort.

We'll then consider whether negative thought patterns or other mental glitches may be causing, worsening, or prolonging your pain. We'll take a critical look at how you handle anxiety and depression and examine how those "learned responses" are hurting you. For example, if you tend to feel helpless and always assume the worst, we'll question whether this assumption has a basis in reality or is simply negative thinking.

We'll look at your current coping mechanisms and their consequences. If you take a walk with your family every day after work, for example, we'll acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact that habit is having on your life. On the other hand, if you're engaging in self-destructive habits, such as drinking or using other substances, I'll invite you to examine how that's affecting your life. I have experience running substance abuse programs and I understand the psychology of addiction. So I can recommend a variety of effective treatment programs and strategies.

I know how hard it can be to face deep-seated fears, shame, resentment, and other powerful emotions, so I will do everything I can to help you comfortably process them. I provide a therapeutic environment that feels relaxing and safe. My office has been meticulously sound-proofed and filled with the relaxing sights and sounds of the natural world—a comfortable and calming place to express yourself.

Individual therapy isn't just about experiencing emotions, though. It's also about inspiring and empowering you to invest in self-care and to experiment with activities that lift your mood and improve your life situation. It's often difficult to find balance in today's world, but I can introduce you to new strategies for self-care that may not have occurred to you.

Our sessions will also allow you to explore the possibility of alternate life paths. While I won't attempt to influence the direction of any of your personal decisions, I will encourage you to recognize instances where social, family, religious, or other pressures may have led you to decisions that no longer work for you. I'll encourage you to identify what *you* want out of life, set aside your fears, and make authentic, personally fulfilling choices.

I'm more than happy to work myself out of a job if I can. My goal is to help you feel better and achieve meaningful, lasting change as quickly as possible so you can take what you've learned out into the real world and use it to transform your life. Once you're able to better manage your emotions and find that you are spending most of your time feeling happy, fulfilled, and at ease, you'll know our work together is finished.

## As you consider individual therapy, you may be thinking. . .

*Therapy is so expensive! The last thing I need is another bill to pay.*

For most people, the investment in therapy is more than worth it, providing wide-ranging positive changes in your life. On the other hand, the cost of not working on your issues could ultimately cause more problems down the road, such as job loss, relationship issues, or health complications.

Professional counseling can help you get more out of life. As your attitude improves and you're better able to handle the inevitable stress that is part of life, you may even come across new opportunities that were previously closed to you.

*Are you going to put me on medication?*

My approach is based on resolving the psychological *cause* of your difficulties, not just treating the symptoms. It can be very difficult to find the right medication for an individual's biochemistry; even the right meds usually come with unpleasant side effects, and some have dependency risks. In most cases, it is possible to find a non-medication treatment plan for depression or anxiety, so medication will never be the first solution I suggest.

That said, medication can be extremely helpful for some people. If you are interested in exploring your options, I can refer you to a prescribing psychiatrist. Finding an effective medication is an experimental process of trial and error. But with your permission, I would be happy to work together with you and your psychiatrist as you search for a medication that works for you.

*How do I know we will be a good working team?*

Client success depends heavily on the level of trust between the therapist and the client. So you can't always find a therapist that is perfect for you just from looking at a website or even from following a recommendation from a friend. Therapists are like shoes: you may have to try a few on to find the best fit. It may take a phone call or a session or two to really find out whether the

two of us are a good match. If you're interested in learning more about your inner-workings and you feel ready to create a better life for yourself, there is an excellent chance an exploratory call or initial session would be worth your time.

## I Can Help You Feel Better

I have only ever had one career. I decided on this career path in high school, became a licensed therapist immediately after college, and have been offering professional counseling to individuals and couples ([and polycules](#)) ever since. I keep my professional knowledge up-to-date, I am in a weekly consultation group with trusted colleagues, and I continue to work on my own mental well-being so that I can be the best version of myself for my clients.

I have 30 years' experience helping others overcome anxiety, depression, and a variety of other psychological difficulties. I would look forward to helping you set aside your doubts and live your best life. Feel free to [visit my contact page](#) to set up an initial individual therapy appointment and determine if we would be a good working team. You can also [visit my home page](#) to learn about my other therapeutic specialties.

Courtesy of:



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