

Relief after a lifetime of suffering

John (name has been changed), a self-employed professional who lives in Lawrence, suffered from anxiety and panic attacks for more than 40 years. When he was 8 years old, he experienced a traumatic event that triggered the onset of his illness. Before he was diagnosed with severe anxiety disorder, he hid his panic attacks from his family and friends, not understanding that his illness could be treated. “For a long time I covered up my illness by making excuses and lying to my family,” John stated. “It was a very difficult time.”

John was referred to the Anxiety Disorders Clinic by Dr. Joe Douglas at Bert Nash. “At first I was very skeptical. Most of my previous treatment had been centered on talk therapy, and I didn’t understand how this would be different. I had also been very resistant to taking medication. Dr. Douglas told me the clinic used a new kind of therapy, exposure therapy, and it was very effective. He really encouraged me to try it.”

In June 2009, John started treatment with the Anxiety Disorders Clinic and the coordinator of the program, Dr. Sandra Lawrence. After a year in the program, he is extremely pleased with his progress. He has participated in two Anxiety Disorders groups and meets weekly with Dr. Lawrence for one-on-one counseling.

“I am so thankful to Dr. Douglas, Dr. Lawrence, and the Bert Nash Center. I have never been so happy. The treatment has given me my life back,” John stated. “Although the program is a lot of work for both the patient and the therapist, it is worth it. I can’t praise Dr. Lawrence enough.”

New hope and confidence

In her late 40s, Sarah (name has been changed) was housebound for three years as a result of her severe anxiety. She worked at home and her roommate did the grocery shopping and errands for her. “I was paralyzed; I was not able to leave the house. My anxiety had really gotten out of control,” she stated. “In 2009 I finally made the call to Bert Nash, and shortly after I was able to meet with Dr. Sandra Lawrence. My life changed after that. I now have a life – and a future.”

Until she met with Dr. Lawrence, Sarah had never been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. “I always knew something was wrong, but I didn’t know the name of it until I went to the Bert Nash Center,” Sarah remarked.

Sarah started seeing Dr. Lawrence for private therapy and eventually joined a group in the Anxiety Disorders Clinic. “The clinic was extremely helpful and it was a very welcoming place. Dr. Lawrence presented the tools and information and then gave us homework assignments that were geared to our individual diagnoses.”

The Bert Nash Center created the Clinic because of a need that wasn’t being fulfilled. Individuals with severe anxiety had nowhere to turn for help. “Sarah is a real success story,” stated Dr. Lawrence. “She has taken the tools she learned in the clinic and applied them with great success to her life. She now works outside of her home and is able to engage with people in a very effective way.”

Sarah sums it up best: “I hope others with this problem will call Bert Nash. The treatment has given me confidence to deal with my anxiety. Now, at age 51, I am equipped with the tools and advice I need to meet everyday challenges. I feel like my life just started! I am so blessed and thankful.”

Since 1950, the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center has advanced the mental health of the Douglas County community through comprehensive behavioral health services responsive to evolving needs and changing environments.

The Bert Nash Center is committed to:
Quality, accessibility and innovation;
Education and advocacy;
Strong partnerships in promoting health;
and Financial stability



Bert Nash
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

200 Maine Street | Suite A
Lawrence, KS 66044
(785) 843-9192 | (785) 843-0264 (fax)
www.bertnash.org



ANXIETY DISORDERS CLINIC

What are anxiety disorders?

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress – it pushes us to study for an exam, deal with a work problem, or be cautious when necessary. A certain amount of anxiety is normal and helps us cope with everyday challenges. However, it is not healthy when frequent anxiety interferes with work, activities, school, and recreation.

Anxiety disorders include:

- social phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder);
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD);
- generalized anxiety disorder (GAD);
- panic disorder;
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD); and
- agoraphobia.

Approximately 40 million American adults have an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders can be successfully treated with appropriate therapy.

The Bert Nash Center's Anxiety Disorders Clinic (ADC) has been established specifically for an outpatient setting and is based on rigorous, scientifically based treatment protocols. This program is unique to the Bert Nash Center. Developed by Sandra Lawrence, Ph.D., the clinic offers individuals methods for learning to manage and conquer their fears, anxieties or phobias. The ADC employs exposure therapy, a well-researched and effective form of therapy that helps individuals manage and recover from anxiety disorders.

How do I know if I have an anxiety disorder?

You may be experiencing some of the following symptoms. The following disorders cause great disruption in an individual's daily life and relationships.

Social Phobia/Social Anxiety Disorder – Social Phobia or Social Anxiety Disorder is the extreme fear of being scrutinized and judged by others in social or performance situations. Such anxiety interferes with an individual's ability to develop friendships, pursue job opportunities, complete school or pursue other goals. Individuals with social phobia recognize their disorder severely limits their activities. Approximately 15 million American adults have social phobia.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – PTSD can develop at any age. This disorder may occur after an individual has experienced a traumatic event, like a natural disaster (hurricane, tornado or earthquake) or a violent personal assault such as rape, mugging, domestic violence, or an act of terrorism. Approximately 7.7 million American adults suffer from PTSD. Approximately 19 percent of Vietnam veterans experienced PTSD at some point after the war and many veterans of recent wars have experienced PTSD symptoms.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) – GAD is characterized by persistent, excessive and unrealistic worry about everyday things. An individual with GAD experiences chronic and excessive worry about health, family, money or work issues. Physical symptoms of GAD may include muscle tension, fatigue, restlessness, difficulty sleeping and edginess. The individual's ability to do his job, go to school or enjoy activities is severely compromised. Approximately 6.8 million American adults have GAD in a given year.

Panic Disorder –

Individuals with panic disorder experience spontaneous panic attacks. During a panic attack an individual suffers from an abrupt onset of intense fear that reaches its peak within a few minutes. Physical symptoms of a panic attack mimic those of illnesses such as heart disease, thyroid problems, and breathing disorders. Individuals experiencing panic attacks may make repeated trips to their doctor's office or the emergency room. Approximately 6 million American adults have panic disorder. About one in three people with panic disorder develops agoraphobia (see below).



Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) –

Individuals with OCD suffer from unwanted and intrusive thoughts that they cannot dismiss. As a result of these intrusive thoughts (obsessions), an individual may repeat specific behaviors and routines (compulsions) in an effort to ease their anxiety and get rid of the thoughts. For example, someone may fear germs and wash their hands repeatedly within a short period of time. Common compulsions include excessive hand washing, checking locks, obsessively repeating tasks or hoarding items. Approximately 2.2 million American adults have OCD.

Agoraphobia –

Agoraphobia involves intense fear and anxiety of any place or situation where escape might be difficult. Individuals with agoraphobia often avoid situations such as being outside the home, traveling in a car, bus or airplane, or being in a crowd. Approximately 1.8 million American adults have agoraphobia without a history of panic disorder.

What should I do if I think I have an anxiety disorder?

Call the Bert Nash Center main number, 785-843-9192 (from Baldwin City call 888-843-9192), to make an appointment. Remember that mental health care, like other health services, is a resource that is available to you when you just can't seem to handle your problems on your own. Research tells us that one in four adults will experience a diagnosable mental illness in their lifetime.

Will insurance cover my treatment?

In order to receive services, you must be a Douglas County resident. During your initial phone call, you will be asked to provide information about insurance and income in order to determine your payment rate. Fees vary according to the services provided and are comparable to or lower than the cost of similar services in private agencies. Bert Nash is an approved provider for mental health services for many insurers. Our staff files claims to private insurance companies, Medicaid (Kansas), and Medicare. Clients without insurance may qualify for sliding scale fees based on income. Payment is expected at the time of service.

The Good News

No one needs to suffer in silence. Anxiety disorders cause extreme hardship for both individuals and families. With the right therapy, anxiety disorders can be treated. Successful treatment means that an individual can enjoy life again and contribute to his family, friends and community.

Statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health