

## Press Release

For immediate release



### **Manchester based charity challenges people to hold pythons & tarantulas**

Manchester based Anxiety UK, the nation's leading anxiety disorders charity, is challenging people to face their fears of spiders and snakes with a unique workshop in September. An estimated 13% of adults will develop a phobia at some point in their life,<sup>1</sup> common fears being a fear of snakes and/or spiders.

To help people combat this, Anxiety UK will be providing an Animal Encounters Workshop in Hulme on 26<sup>th</sup> September where participants will get the chance to learn more about the animals and work up to holding a real live python or tarantula. Led by Jay Gunn of Jays Animal Encounters<sup>2</sup>, participants will start small by perhaps looking at a picture of a snake or spider, then holding a toy snake or spider, then a snake or spider's shed skin and finally a tarantula or python. The sessions allow the participants to be in control of any snake or spider situation, giving them the confidence to handle future situations more rationally and with greater control.

The Animal Encounters Workshop is being held during Anxiety UK's Face Your Fears Week, 25 September – 1 October, where people all over the country are being encouraged to challenge their fears and phobias. The charity is running a programme of challenge events during the week, including an abseil at the Trafford Centre's bell tower, treetop adventures, skydives and mountain treks – all designed to help end the restrictions that phobias have placed on individual's lives.

“Facing your fears, especially if it is something that gives you great anxiety, is a well documented way to overcome them,” says Anxiety UK CEO, Nicky Lidbetter. “Many people with anxiety struggle to make people understand what it is like to live with anxiety. Face Your Fears Week gives participants a chance to experience a tiny percentage of the fear that many live with on a daily basis. We're pleased to offer these opportunities to people who want to challenge their fears and move forward.”

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<sup>1</sup> Wittchen, H.U (1998) in Emmelkamp, P.M.G Bouman, TK & Scholing, 'Anxiety Disorders: A practitioner's Guide.' Wiley, 1992

<sup>2</sup> Jay is a qualified teacher and professional animal handler. His carefully planned sessions help phobia sufferers to develop a better understanding of snakes and spiders, to quash so many of those urban myths and to actually be able to appreciate some of the animals' amazing abilities.

Julie has had a fear of spiders her entire life to the point where she would block all of the vents in her home to prevent them from getting in. As a child she would panic at the sight of spiders and would cry inconsolably until they were removed from the room. "I've taken small steps in the past few years to help me to be a bit more rational when faced with a spider. I see the Animal Encounters Workshop as the last major step in overcoming my fear – though I no doubt will find it very difficult!"

The workshops are limited to 15 participants in each session and individuals are encouraged to raise sponsorship to take part in the event, donating the remaining funds to the charity.

To book a place by 29<sup>th</sup> August, ring 08444 775 774, email [faceyourfears@anxietyuk.org.uk](mailto:faceyourfears@anxietyuk.org.uk) or visit [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk).

Birmingham based CCBT Limited is pleased to announce that they are sole Sponsors for Anxiety UK's "FACE YOUR FEARS WEEK" 25 September to 2 October 2011.

## Ends

## Contact

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## Notes to Editors

**Anxiety UK** is a national registered charity formed in 1970 by a sufferer of agoraphobia for those affected by anxiety disorders, and today is the leading authority on anxiety disorders and phobias in the UK. We are still a user-led organisation, run by sufferers and ex-sufferers of anxiety disorders.

Anxiety disorders are common and treatable, and Anxiety UK works to relieve and support those living with these conditions by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including fast access to reduced cost 1:1 therapy services. The Anxiety UK helpline alone receives over 16,000 calls a year from people suffering from phobias and anxiety disorders.

We provide support to people with any anxiety condition, or specific phobia such as fear of spiders, blushing, vomiting, being alone, public speaking, heights - in fact, any fear that stops people from living their lives to the full.