



# Q3 PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

01/07/2018 – 30/09/2018

## Half of first-time homeowners say buying process made them ill

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13/08/2018



First-time buyers are sacrificing health, relationships and careers to get on the housing ladder, research shows.



In August 2018, AnxietyUK gave their take on the effect the buying process has on first-time buyers. This was published across several online platforms including Financial Reporter and Money Wise.

Over half of aspiring homeowners were made ill by the stresses of the buying experience – up from just over a third in 2017, a survey by challenger bank Aldermore found.

And 46% said the house purchasing experience caused issues in their relationship, up from 34% last year.

This may not come as a total surprise with almost half of first time buyers having a property fall through.

Wannabe homeowners also seem prepared to make career changes to get their foot on the property ladder with 43% of recent first time buyers saying they gave up being self-employed due to the difficulties of securing a mortgage. This compares to 32% in 2017.

Nicky Lidbetter, Chief Executive of Anxiety UK, said: *“Moving house can be a stressful event for anyone and frequently represents a time of transition and change. For first time buyers, typically young people, this big life event can come at a time when people are already coping with other life stressors including maintaining employment, building relationships and starting a family.*

*“As such, I am not at all surprised to hear that their wellbeing has been found to be adversely affected through the buying process, particularly with the rise in house prices. This has been somewhat reflective of the increased rates of anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression that we are seeing in all areas of society, and indeed here at Anxiety UK.”*

# Drawing pictures of 'smiling' spiders can help people overcome arachnophobia



**D**rawing pictures of friendly spiders can help people overcome arachnophobia, a Harley Street hypnotherapist has said.

Adam Cox, a Clinical Hypnotherapist, encourages clients in his art therapy sessions to draw brightly coloured, smiling spiders with “big eyes” to reduce their feelings of anxiety towards the arachnids.

With an estimated 12 million UK adults admitting to arachnophobia, Mr Cox’s techniques could become increasingly sought after as the autumn marks the start of spider mating season.

Mr Cox’s therapy workshops involve an average of 10-15 participants, all of whom have been able to touch a tarantula or help capture and release a house spider afterwards.

*An Anxiety UK spokesman said: “Art could play a role in the treatment of spider phobia in that a client with this fear may find it helpful, as part of the graded exposure process, to draw a spider and in doing so, become accustomed and eventually overcome any fear associated with this activity thus enabling them to then move on to the next step, which might be seeing a spider in a jar, for example, placed at the far side of a room.”*

## Night terrors: what do anxiety dreams mean?



These are anxious times - but how does this affect our sleep, and what can we learn from the exam crises and missed trains that haunt the small hours

“We have always had a proportion of people who contact us saying their dreams bother them,” says Nicky Lidbetter, the chief executive of the charity Anxiety UK, whose own anxiety dreams tend to centre on being stuck in traffic (she is agoraphobic). But she and her colleagues have not noticed an increase in the number of people reporting them.



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## The Innocents on Netflix: What condition does Ryan McDaniel have? What is agoraphobia?

THE INNOCENTS is the latest smash series from Netflix. Many fans have been talking about Ryan McDaniel's battle with agoraphobia. We spoke to AnxietyUK CEO Nicky Lidbetter about what TV shows get right and wrong about the condition.

According to Nicky Lidbetter, CEO of AnxietyUK, who spoke exclusively to Express.co.uk, these symptoms are typical of those that affect agoraphobics.

Lidbetter offered the follow list of symptoms as typical of the condition, which affects up to 430,000 people in the UK:

- Avoidance of certain places and of being able to travel only within a restricted radius from a perceived safe place, typically home
- Needing reassurance in situations where there is no immediate escape, e.g. on the train, seated in the middle of a row at the cinema
- Feeling psychologically 'trapped'
- Avoiding travel by public transport
- Dependence on a trusted family member, partner or friend to go to certain places

"Additionally," she added, "the condition is often found comorbid with panic attacks and panic disorder although can exist in isolation."

Lidbetter said: "In extreme cases, agoraphobia can mean that the person living with the condition feels so anxious that they cannot leave their home, but this is not always the case."

Although Lidbetter declined to comment about The Innocents specifically, she said: "Frequently, in TV and film, it is the case that severe and extreme cases of agoraphobia are more commonly shown."



# 7 ways to cope at Christmas if you have depression or anxiety

Because the festive period isn't always fun and games...

If you identify with the latter, then here are some top tips to keep things as stress-free as possible, from Nicky Lidbetter, CEO of [Anxiety.co.uk](https://www.anxiety.co.uk).

## 1 Don't overindulge

Indulgence is definitely a word we would use at Christmas, but as tempting as it is to treat ourselves all the time, it can spell bad news for your mental health. Too much sugar and caffeine can cause us to peak and crash and this often [impacts our moods](#), especially at an already-stressful time of year. Instead, keep your Vitamin B & D topped up, eat lots of oily fish and add some spice!

## 2 Drink responsibly

Just one more glass of Prosecco... We all uttered those words, right? It may help you relax and enjoy yourself in the short term, but drinking too much (and the subsequent hangover) can [make your anxiety worse](#).

## 6 Practice mindfulness

Only 10 minutes of [mindfulness](#) practice each day can help to keep you grounded, calm and relaxed. Take some me time and go for a walk, do some yoga or just find a quiet space to take a few deep breaths. A great technique to bring you back to the present moment is the [5-5-5 technique](#): become aware of five things you can see, five things you can hear, and five things making contact with your body. This will help keep you calm and more focused.

## 7 Rest

Be sure to get plenty of sleep and rest during Christmas as feeling tired can lead to us feeling overwhelmed and less able to cope. Enjoy an early night or relaxing lie in with [brekkie in bed](#). That's what the holiday season is all about!

## 3 Keep Active

You may want to spend all day in your PJs, but a walk with the dog, run or trip to your local yoga studio or zumba class can do wonders for combatting anxiety. [New research](#), published in the *Lancet Psychiatry*, says that just two hours of any form of [exercise](#) each week may make a significant impact to your mental health.

## 4 Make time for yourself

We all need a time out now and again, especially at Christmas! Watch your favourite film, [read a book](#), listen to music – whatever works for you. Be sure to practice some self-preservation and be kind to yourself.

## 5 Have a plan for the party season

If you are heading out to a party or night out, be sure to have a plan in place for if your anxiety does peak. Speak to a friend ahead of your festive plans and discuss the best methods to help you if you enter a panic. This means that you have a trusted person who is equipped to help you cope and make you feel safe.



# 'IT'S HARD TO BREATHE' Woman reveals how crippling social anxiety is wrecking her summer

For photographer Louna Walker the very thought of being invited out to enjoy the sunshine is her living nightmare

## How to cope

DAVE SMITHSON, services manager at charity Anxiety UK, says:

1. **Challenge your thinking patterns and the unhelpful thoughts that social anxiety tries to make you feel.** Try to replace each irrational thought with a more rational one, but one at a time, rather than dealing with them all at once.
2. **Try to shift the focus away from yourself to help you become less self-conscious.** Do this by paying attention to other people rather than yourself. Even if it's just noticing what they are wearing, what they are saying or how they are speaking. It can take your mind off negative thoughts.
3. **Use gradual exposure to social situations to build your confidence.** Start small with a few people, notice how you feel and how you deal with it, then

learn from this and build up from there.

4. **Practise breathing techniques to reduce your anxiety level.** Breathe in through the nose for four seconds, hold for two seconds, breathe out through the mouth for six seconds, and repeat ten times.
5. **Do things differently and set yourself key goals to build confidence.** Aim to do something you would not usually do. Set small targets at first and build on them gradually, such as going to the cafe at lunchtime when it is busy or meeting a friend for a drink after work.
6. **Try some talking therapy to help build your resilience, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).** A therapist will help you identify and challenge your thoughts and set goals in relation to gradual exposure. It can be really helpful. ■

# I've Lived With Trichotillomania For A Decade & Here's What I Want You To Know



from university. The AnxietyUK spokesperson explained the treatment options thus: "Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is recommended for those with trichotillomania, especially a form of CBT called Habit Reversal Training, and has been used in treating stammering, nail biting and skin picking."

They added, "Items such as stress-balls, tangle toys and fidget cubes can be effective tools for reducing the frequency of hair pulling by redirecting the compulsive behaviour into something less destructive. Some find keeping a record or diary of their hair pulling helps them identify when the impulses are at their strongest." There's no universal trichotillomania experience, of course. Your GP should be committed to figuring out what's best for you.



# Press Links

Your Money

[\*Stress of Buying a Home for First Time Buyers\*](#)

The Telegraph

[\*Drawing Spiders to Overcome Arachnophobia\*](#)

The Guardian

[\*What Do Anxiety Dreams Mean?\*](#)

The Daily Express

[\*What is Agoraphobia?\*](#)

Prima

[\*7 Ways To Cope At Christmas with Anxiety\*](#)

Mail Online

[\*University Bans Clapping\*](#)

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