

March 2, 2010

Here is one woman's experience with depression/anxiety and Elle Garfield/ Awareness Counselling:

My depression began in my teenage years, but my family and I just chalked it up to teenage hormones. It continued to develop through my college years, but I chalked that up to a stressful schedule. When I was engaged and moved in with my fiancé and the bickers turned into daily wars making me fear for our relationship, I finally asked it out loud; "Do you think I'm depressed?" After approaching my physician and starting a prescription regimen, those fights became open communication. There were no more extreme reactions to the emotions I felt. But the anxiety attacks began when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, and I still didn't feel the way I wanted to, happy.

My physician had recommended counseling from the beginning, but I just didn't feel I was strong enough to do it. I didn't want to share my feeling with someone I barely knew. The last thing I wanted was to cry in front of a person I had just met. Plus, I hadn't had any trauma in my life, so how would I benefit from counseling? And if depression is just a chemical imbalance, how could talking help?

After deciding to begin a family with my husband, I felt it was necessary to at least try a session for the sake of my husband's sanity in preparation for raging pregnancy hormones and to prevent post-pardem depression. My first session went better than expected. I was overly sensitive to my feelings and did cry, which was what I had feared, but it was not nearly as debilitating as I thought it would be. I was able to communicate why I had finally come. I was able to set my own goals. And as the

sessions came and went, I finally acquired a sense of control over my emotional well-being.

Depression feels like tunnel vision, like you are wearing blinders. Anxiety feels like an explosion of emotion and is physically exhausting. I constantly felt like there was a book sitting on my chest. After counseling, I no longer felt like I was walking through water, all that heavy pressure pushing on you from every direction. No more treading water. When faced with a situation that used to be overwhelming, no more feeling the need to hide from the world under a giant rock. Occasionally, the feelings still occur, but now I am able to maneuver over the hurdles. Depression made everything cloudy and counseling cleared up my thoughts. I now have the tools to assess the way my mind and body are reacting and make changes. Everyday activities have become so much less cumbersome. The tools given to me by Elle Garfield and Awareness Counseling has put me back in control of how I feel, perceive, process, relate, manage, cope, and re-act.

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