



Conscious Life presents

ANXIETY SUPER CONFERENCE

Recognizing and managing anxiety and transitions

Guest: Melissa Douglass

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[00:00:10] Jaia Bristow

Hello, and welcome to this conference all about anxiety. My name is Jaia Bristow, and I'm one of your hosts. And today I am delighted to be welcoming Melissa Douglass.

Welcome, Melissa.

Melissa Douglass

Hi, Jaia. Thanks so much for having me.

Jaia Bristow

Thank you so much for joining us.

So Melissa is a therapist, a social worker, a professor, and a mental health consultant who manages a virtual practice.

So you're very well placed to be talking to us about anxiety. And I'm curious in your professional context, where you find that anxiety comes up most of the time and what anxiety means to you? Because of course, it's a really broad topic.

Melissa Douglass

Absolutely. It is a really large topic.

In my practice. I work with a lot of students, so high school, whole secondary, new professionals, and we really focus on working with people who are going through life transitions. So that's where I notice anxiety comes up a lot.

It's around the expectations of maybe what they feel is required of them. But then also that angst, natural angst that comes up when we are navigating something different. So we're familiar and we already know what we've been experiencing, what we've been doing, but when we're making that next decision about a new school, a new program, a new job, maybe getting married, maybe being a parent for the first time, maybe we're getting divorced. Just all those different things that come up. That's something that we haven't experienced before and that can cause a lot of anxiety.

I really like to normalize anxiety sometimes, too, in the aspect of it's not just when things are hard or we're in a difficult space or have experienced some kind of trauma. Anxiety comes up when we're

navigating good things, too, like there are great things that come with a wedding or promotion or exiting a bad relationship that also has some anxiety with it as well.

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But I would absolutely say, in the last several years, definitely social media, just all of the pressures that come from that external world, as well as the comparison of what it looks like I'm supposed to be doing, thinking, feeling. And if I'm not in that particular space, then I'm shaming myself for that. And that can fear anxiety in a whole different way as well.

So a very large answer, I know, but definitely in transitions, definitely exacerbated by external factors. And it comes in both good and bad times, too.

Jaia Bristow

I love what you're saying around, A) naming some of the different types of transitions that one can have in life. You talked about transitioning from school, out of school or changing programs or getting married or becoming a parent or changing jobs.

And I love what you were saying about how anxiety can come up, both, if we lose a job, for example, then that's a big transition, and that's scary and can, of course be anxiety inducing. They can also come up in positive transitions or good events, like you talked about weddings or promotions.

So I think that's so important to acknowledge that it's not always, as you say, it's not always like a traumatic event that's anxiety provoking. And it doesn't just come up in people who have, of course, it's connected to trauma, and people who have suffered trauma will probably have more heightened anxiety, but it's not just those people. Everyone is impacted by anxiety. And that's why it's such a broad topic, and that's why it's so important to have these conversations.

Melissa Douglass

To be anxious is part of the human experience. It's one of our most natural, primitive emotions that we have as people because it's fear based. And what human do we know that doesn't fear something?

I think normalizing that and having the conversation that say, hey, to some degree what you're experiencing is actually to be expected. And when we think about the intensity, the duration or the frequency of the symptoms that we're experiencing with anxiety, then we can talk about it moving into the space of mental illness. But to be anxious is to be normal or to be human.

Jaia Bristow

And again, when you're talking about fear, fear is such a normal emotion. And comparison, when you were talking about social media and how anxiety often shows up as, what we think we're supposed to be or what it looks like we're supposed to be.

And so I think that, as you say, anxiety is a normal part of the human experience, but in today's era, it's definitely heightened across in so many different ways. Because there's social media which heightens it, we're still living through a global pandemic, I think. I don't know, in some countries it's officially no longer a pandemic, and in others it's still a pandemic. But either way, we're all living through that.

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And then there's things like the racial tensions across the globe are suddenly, have always existed, but suddenly being talked about a lot more. And people experience anxiety across the spectrum about these kinds of things. And then there's climate crisis.

So there's so much going on in the world, and then people have all their personal stuff happening. Then, of course, there's things like relationships, which of course, bring up stuff.

So I'm not naming all these things to cause anxiety in our listeners. That's absolutely not what I want to do. I'm just reiterating what you're saying about anxiety is a normal part of human experience. And in today's age, it's totally, I think, normal that it's even more heightened.

Melissa Douglass

Absolutely. Yes.

Jaia Bristow

And so what are some ways that you work with clients who are coming in suffering from anxiety? And maybe, because we established that it's quite broad, let's focus especially on anxiety around transitions. What are some ways that you support clients going through transitions, whether positive or negative?

Melissa Douglass

So I think in this space, the experience of having anxiety really manifests in a symptom of ruminating. So our brains are going 90 miles a minute. And I like to sometimes just bring a little fun to the conversation. Sometimes our brain can do the 'What If' game, and it's a rabbit hole. Well, what is this? And what about that? And what is this? And it can just go on and on and on.

And when I tell clients that, they're like, oh my gosh, how did you know? So I think the ruminating thoughts that come because we're moving into a space that we're not familiar with. We have these ideas. We have these thoughts and considerations of what we think this next phase is going to look like and what the expectations are, but we haven't lived it yet.

So there's just all this stuff that's trapped inside of us that's causing us to be overloaded with these thoughts that are just free floating within our minds.

And so I like to do a little bit of education first when it comes to anxiety for people to understand, why is this happening? Why are all these thoughts going? Why can't I seem to slow them down? Why does it seem like my brain is always so noisy?

And so I like to explain what that process looks like sometimes in our brains for anxiety. And when we have these neurons that develop from our amygdala, so very back part of our brains, and these neurons are being developed. And when we have these fear based emotions, sometimes there's an overdevelopment of those neurons that are happening, but those neurons have to travel all the way to the front of our brains up here in our prefrontal cortex, to actually be rationalized.

So this is where all of our executive functioning skills are, where we're able to problem solve, critically think, do the rationalization, all those things. And I like to educate my clients on understanding that

sometimes when there's an overproduction of those anxiety based, anxiety rooted neurons that are being developed. They don't always make it up here. It doesn't look like a long way to travel, but for a little microscopic neuron that's like going to the moon.

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And so just having that education that allows them to understand what's actually happening on a neurological level, and it helps them to understand and apply some of the interventions and the coping skills that we then suggest.

So things like learning how to ground ourselves, to do deep breathing, to practice mindfulness, to sometimes just bind them with journaling. When we have so many thoughts that are going on and where we have so many things that we are like, well, what is this? And what is that? Sometimes journaling and saying, okay, everything that's in my brain right now, I'm just going to put it on this paper.

If I can solve it, figure out a solution to it, answer the question, great. If I can't, I'm just going to walk away from it for a moment and allow myself to center. That can be helpful when we just have a lot of things that are going on.

So before we get to the interventions and the coping tools and really applying some things to help decrease some of those symptoms that are really displaying themselves, that education first because clients then get why deep breathing is so helpful.

If I have all of these free floating neurons that are going on or traveling in my brain and they're not in the space to be properly processed, when we're doing that deep breathing and we're grounding ourselves and we're decreasing our heart rate, it's allowing all of that movement to also slow down.

And so I think it helps clients to be a lot more invested and understand why what we recommend is actually helpful. And it makes that connection between the psychological and mental space and the biology just of our bodies and how those things work.

And I think it also helps to decrease some of the shame that's sometimes associated with people who have a much more increased intensity of symptoms because there's been this added question of, what's wrong with me? Why can't I slow this down? Why can't I figure this out? Why can't I be excited about this next thing that I'm going into?

So understanding those things and helping them to see, this is why this is happening, before we get to what to do about it, is a good summary of how I started this work with clients who are experiencing transitions.

Jaia Bristow

That's fantastic. And it's fantastic on so many levels because, like we were saying at the beginning, experiencing anxiety is a normal part of the human condition. And so I think in everything you've just said, that education is really important because as you say, it kind of normalizes it. So it's no longer like, what's wrong with me? And all those feelings of the racing thoughts and like, why is this happening?

And then so often when we experience anxiety, we have an extra layer of anxiety about our anxiety. By having that education, it removes at least one of the layers. It removes the extra layer of, okay, I'm

experiencing anxiety. This isn't that there's something drastically wrong with me. It's a normal part of the human experience. It's because these neurons are struggling to get from the amygdala to the prefrontal cortex, did you say? Biology was never my strong suit.

[00:12:05] Melissa Douglass

You got it.

Jaia Bristow

I think that's great. And as you say, it helps therefore reduce shame around having anxiety. And so much of anxiety as well comes from not knowing. Again what you talked about. The fear of the unknown. So by having that knowledge, having that education, that's a fantastic first step.

And I think in some ways, you're introducing all the other interviews I'm doing and other people are doing, and all the exercises and methodologies that we're providing throughout this conference, that you're providing the why behind it. And I think that that's really important and really fantastic, so thank you.

Melissa Douglass

Yes, thank you.

Jaia Bristow

And so what would be the next step then?

Melissa Douglass

So everybody's process is different. It's not linear. So sometimes we do the education and we start to learn some of the interventions and applying some of those things. Sometimes we're having to go back to some childhood experiences and some things that are learned.

I mentioned earlier that sometimes our anxiety is very rooted in expectations of either that's been placed on us or that we're placing on ourselves. Sometimes we're hard on ourselves about things.

Anxiety also can manifest sometimes a lot of perfectionism. So I have to have everything correct the right way before I do anything. And if it's not happening that way, then again, some of those hard emotions or non-affirming thoughts and feelings are being introduced into our psyche.

What are some other things that come up? So sometimes going back again into those earlier childhood or young adulthood experiences can surface some, oftentimes, some traumas and traumatic events that have happened. Some experiences that probably haven't been processed or understood in the most effective or healthy ways. And they're also having some root in some of these expectations or thoughts that are happening.

And then we also have some people, too, that get stuck in this analysis paralysis, is what we call it. I'm thinking and overthinking everything so much. And because of the perfectionism, I'm so afraid to make a step or do something because I don't want to get it wrong. I don't want to disappoint people. I don't want to disappoint myself. And so we get stuck in doing anything.

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So the interventions and the processes from there really depends on what surfaces for people and what becomes the root of some of the anxiety that is causing them to have some of the symptoms and the behaviors and the thoughts that they have. And really tailoring their next several sessions to identify and process some of those things.

And we go back and forth. Sometimes we're educating on trauma and family of origin challenges or maladaptions to some of our cognitive processes. Sometimes we're doing a lot of CBT where we're training our brains to respond differently, to process differently.

So there's a lot of different angles that can happen. And sometimes we're educating, and then we're doing coping skills, but then we're going back to process, and then we're doing it every which way from there, too.

But what we're really also doing from the clinical space is we're making sure that the symptoms that are most disruptive to clients' lives are actually decreasing, because that's the goal of therapy. When you have a mental health condition that's disrupting your natural life, we want to improve the quality of life and decrease those symptoms.

So if there is a client that's coming to services rooted in anxiety or we discover through conversation that anxiety is the root of what they're experiencing, then we want to make sure that we're tracking these symptoms and the experiences that they're having to make sure that over time these things are being decreased.

Jaia Bristow

And I love what you're saying about how healing is nonlinear. Working with anxiety is nonlinear. So we'll have moments where we feel good, and anxiety particularly is one that can pop up here and there and we think everything's fine, and then suddenly it pops up or a culmination of events make it come up. And then other times it can subside for a while.

So I love what you are saying about that element of nonlinear. And as well, what you were saying about, so often we focus on anxiety as a fear about the future, but actually sometimes to work with it and heal from it, we need to go back into the past. We need to understand what traumas have happened, what is going on, what is triggering the anxiety.

And I think it's great that what I hear from the work you do, is working with immediate symptoms as well as working on the history and easing the long-term causes and long-term anxiety, as well as working on the immediate symptoms.

So maybe we could talk a little bit about what some of those symptoms are and then go from there.

Melissa Douglass

So some of the more common symptoms that we attach to anxiety, of course, is the fear and the worry, or fear based thoughts and worries that can manifest. And again, ruminating thoughts where we just have continuous streams of thoughts that are fear based and rooted in worry that just continue. They're very hard to settle or to sometimes even source the different areas that they are coming from or that they pertain to.

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We have increased heart rate sometimes and if that increased heart rate rolls exponentially, because those symptoms are very high, that can then increase or transition to panic attacks, which a lot of people experience those. We have sweating that can happen. Sometimes there's like a restless leg or people are very fidgety sometimes when they're anxious. We also have upset stomach.

So another psychological and biological connection is, when I talked earlier about the neurons that are being developed or released when we are experiencing anxiety, and sometimes when there's an overproduction, those neurons actually communicate with our stomach lining.

So you'll often notice that when people are very anxious, they may sometimes complain that they have a stomach ache or they feel queasy. And so the acid in our stomach is actually irritated sometimes when we have anxiety. And there's just this unsettling in our stomachs as well.

Sometimes there are changes in appetite. There are changes in sleep. I often refer to anxiety as the culprit of the night because when we have those anxious thoughts or those ruminating thoughts that go, go, go, when we go throughout our day, oftentimes we're distracting ourselves. Whether it's in work or through an exercise routine or hanging out with a friend. Sometimes we can avoid those thoughts and distract ourselves from those thoughts because we're engaged in other things.

But when we lay down at night and try to rest ourselves, our brain is like, okay, I got all your attention now. And so things get louder sometimes in the night time. So we often see sleep disturbance as another symptom or consequence of experience and anxiety too.

Well, that was a lot of them. I think that's the most. And of course, knowing that everybody doesn't experience all of those, some people may never have a certain symptom while another person has a large kind of intensity or frequency of a particular symptom as well.

One last one, though, that I think sometimes gets misplaced, sometimes we don't often name it as anxiety when it is that, is that there's a lot of mood disturbance that can happen with anxiety as well. So being irritable or having lack of patience are huge symptoms of anxiety that sometimes people miscalculate it as mood disorders or other things, but that can also be anxiety.

And lastly, anxiety disorders and depression disorders are actually the two largest co-occurring disorders that people experience. Meaning that people can experience anxiety and experience depression at the same time. And so we'll often see a cycle of those symptoms.

So the ruminating thoughts, the increased heart rate, the sweating, the disturbances in our belly, sometimes. Sometimes that can have its effectively experience that, but then it transitions if we are experiencing that perfectionism or avoidance or things that are changing our behaviors.

Sometimes, again, that shame can come. We can feel bad about our lack of productivity or our lack of excitement of what we're experiencing in our lives. Or just if it's something hard that we're experiencing that can have its own effect, and then it cycles right into depressive symptoms.

And so then we become withdrawn. We sometimes isolate. Sometimes we feel sad, sometimes there's anger associated to that. Sometimes we have extreme headaches or our appetite and our sleep gets disrupted as well. And because of those symptoms, anxiety can then get triggered again.

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So it can often be very overwhelming and unsettling when people are experiencing all of these things, because it's hard to name it and source what is what and where things are coming from. And we often have an experience in our lives where it has to be a this or a that. And we don't often get encouraged to understand that as humans, we have duality in our experiences.

So you can have this anxiety that's happening and also make space for being happy about what you are experiencing. Or you can have this anxious experience and also make space for understanding like, okay, sometimes this triggers depression for me. And it's okay for me to name that.

So in those symptoms, sometimes it can get very overwhelming and sometimes it can be unsettling. But being able to, again, I think just humanize the experience and be able to give ourselves space and grace for what's happening, allows for clients to move through their therapeutic journey and their coping experience in a much more healthier way.

Jaia Bristow

Thank you so much for that comprehensive explanation of the symptoms and how they can impact the physiological and the mental. How so often anxiety can be combined with other things, like you mentioned, depression, but I know it can be combined with lots of other conditions, both conditions that come under the mental health category, but also conditions that come under physical health category, for example.

And how anxiety is one of those conditions which, as you talked about, there's duality. So the duality with anxiety sometimes and positive feelings, but also anxiety is one of those conditions which feeds and gets fed and often creates these cycles and vicious cycles.

So you talked about the link with depression and how they feed each other and they become this kind of... And it's so true, I think in so many different ways. So again, the normalizing it and understanding it is so important.

And I'm the queen of trying to distract when I get anxious, trying to distract myself. And then if I try to suddenly start to meditate, I've spoken about this with some meditation teachers, the volume gets turned up of the anxiety. Or trying to go to sleep, and so then it affects sleep. And then, of course, when we're not sleeping properly, that impacts all kinds of other parts of our body and self. And then, of course, that will then impact the anxiety.

And again, that not being able to sleep, so feeling anxious that we can't sleep and then because we're anxious, we can't sleep even more. And so once again, anxiety is a really difficult condition to live with because, as you say, it pops up in everyone. It pops up in so many different ways and it feeds off of itself and other conditions. So it's a hard cycle to break.

Melissa Douglass

Yeah.

[00:24:49] Jaia Bristow

And so amongst all the symptoms you've talked about, there is, of course, when anxiety reaches its peak, people can often experience panic attacks, for example. So maybe we could take some time to talk about what a panic attack is and how to manage that.

Melissa Douglass

So let me say, I love how you summarize and paraphrase. It just makes for a really great conversation.

But yes, sometimes the symptoms just get very escalated. They come very strong, they're very intense. There really isn't a true source as to where a panic attack comes from outside of just the intensity of symptoms that we have already spoken about regarding anxiety.

But it's when those symptoms that are experienced, especially the increased heart rate, sometimes there's hyperventilation so our breathing gets disrupted and very labored. When there are those ruminating thoughts that are happening and that fear is on 200, those main symptoms get very elevated and escalated.

And that transitions into our brains sometimes going into a defense because it's being communicated to in a sense that saying, we are not okay, we're not safe right now, we're in the utmost of danger, and our body is trying to make sense of it.

It can be very scary for a person that's experiencing a panic attack, though, because those symptoms of increased heart rate, not being able to breathe, having really increased fear, those are all the same symptoms of heart attack as well.

So when people experience panic attacks, it can often be very challenging to help them to regain their composure and to breathe because it feels as if my body is going through an experience that is harmful.

But it's important for people who have anxiety, again, that kind of psychoeducation thing to know, that these are normal symptoms that can happen. And something that can help us differentiate, is that panic attacks typically reduce in their intensity within 10 minutes.

So helping a client understand and know that we've just got to get through minute by minute. 10 minutes can feel like a very long time when we're having a panic attack, but teaching them how to be mindful in their bodily experience, which is why yoga and mindfulness and guided visualizations and deep breathing is so important because it helps us to be self aware in our own individual experience in our body.

So having that level of awareness to say, okay, this is a panic attack, I know what's happening, that allows us to gain some kind of control, to say, okay, I just need to deep breathe right now. I need to practice some thought stopping, and with thought stopping that allows for whatever those fear based thoughts that are taking the focus in our brains, we're able to pause.

We can't stop them immediately even though the name of the exercise is called thought stopping. We can't stop them immediately, but we can force a pause. We can force a space that allows our brains to be distracted by something else.

[00:28:21]

So often people think of a happy place or a safe space for them. They think of a calming thought, a happy memory, a person sometimes that might be very grounding and safe for them. But you want to introduce something into your brain that allows your brain to get distracted.

Our brains are the most sophisticated organ in our body, but they're also very distractible. And that distracting capability is very helpful when someone is having a panic attack because it slowly pulls our brain into a different space. And that distraction allows for that time that's needed for us to regulate our breathing, for us to practice that emotion regulation, for us to settle our heart rate to get that circadian rhythm back in its normal rhythm.

And it allows for a person to navigate that panic attack, not necessarily feeling safe immediately, but they transition into feeling safe by realizing what they're going through and say, okay, I know this is a panic attack. I need to activate my deep breathing. I need to activate my mindfulness, let me bring that safe space or that happy place into my brain and let me wait this out.

And again, it sounds very easy to talk through. And anyone who has experienced a panic attack knows how unsettling and hard that feels. I'm a therapist who experiences anxiety, so I get it. But learning, and this is also why preventative measures and reactive measures are important.

So when we talk about coping skills of deep breathing, mindfulness, those are all things that we can do in the moment that can help us to regulate our emotions and to navigate those experiences healthily.

But it's equally as important when we are not having elevated symptoms, when we are actually calm and we're probably not experiencing a great deal of anxiety, it's important for us to practice those preventative measures so that our brain, our minds can start to learn these interventions so that it can become second nature.

So we think about creating new neural pathways in our brain, we have to teach it the different route to go. And just thinking about school or any other place where you learn something, it's a lot better to learn it calmly than to learn it elevated or just not in a good space.

So practicing yoga, walking, exercising, any other kind of meditative practices, really paying attention to regulating chakras, whatever that thing might be for you. Aromatherapy, massages, acupuncture, chiropractic, whatever that might be that allows for that stress and that tension to be released from the body.

Progressive muscle relaxation is also a really great one, too, where we intentionally pull tension into certain places of our body, but then we mindfully release those. So we might intentionally tense up our shoulders or clench our jaws or squeeze our hands, but then we mindfully experience our bodies releasing as we deep breathe, too.

So in the moment of a panic attack or when someone is experiencing a panic attack, all those things are super helpful. Then it's also equally as important in those times when we're not having a panic attack or our anxiety is not as elevated as other times, to practice some of those techniques as well, because our brain is learning that when that time comes, now we know what to go to and what to do. And it helps that 10 minutes or so go by a little bit easier.

[00:32:15] Jaia Bristow

Absolutely. And I love what you're saying about the importance of preventative and reactive measures and practices. And we offer a whole range of them on this conference. We talk about why each one can help. We also offer free meditation and yoga or mindful movement or Qigong sessions each day that people can join in.

And again, I think that one of the key things that I took from that is how these practices, as well as helping regulate our nervous system and rewire the neural pathways and ease during a panic attack, for example, and help with the chronic anxiety in the long-term, it also helps cultivate that self awareness that you were talking about.

So that when these moments happen, when we experience anxiety, we're less identified with the anxiety itself. We're not just living the anxiety, we're living it and there's the voice in our head that's like, oh, okay, I know what this is.

And so even though we still may be experiencing all the physiological symptoms that you were talking about, it's almost like having someone with us during the panic attack. And I know I've experienced that myself. I've done a lot of personal development work. My meditation teacher is my father so I've been doing it since I was a child, and I am a very anxious person who has experienced panic attacks.

So again, it's like in those moments, of course, those things help, but they help more, as you say, almost not in those moments of crisis, but it's supporting ourselves in the long run so that when those moments of crisis come up, we have a tool belt and a bunch of skills and tools that we can use in those moments, which is so important.

Melissa Douglass

Absolutely. It reminds me of sports, too, with muscle memory. The more that you practice, the more that your body learns how to run that race or throw that ball or swim those laps. It becomes muscle memory and you're really teaching your brain and your body how to work together and do it almost automatically. And that's the same thing that we're doing in this particular way as well.

Jaia Bristow

And it was really interesting as well what you were saying about distractibility because we talked about it as a symptom, so sometimes we're getting distracted and then we go to bed at night and the anxiety and the thoughts are more intense. So sometimes it prohibits us, but it's an alarm bell.

I notice like, I speak about this with Dr Sophia Graham as well on this conference, but we talk about when we're watching more TV or playing games on our phone more regularly, often that's an alarm because whether we're conscious of it or not, we're distracting ourselves from our thoughts.

And once again, with practices like meditation and mindfulness and yoga and all these kinds of things, that helps us notice what's happening and then take a step back.

But I love what you were saying about how yes, it's a symptom, but it's also supportive during those moments of crisis, during those panic attacks, for example, to use. And that's also why we distract ourselves. So often it's our brain, like you said, is very intelligent.

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And so, again, like you say, doing deep breathing, thinking of happy thoughts, whether it's thinking of someone comforting to bring about that kind of neurological response, to imagining someone safe and comforting, whether it's imagining a beautiful place.

Sometimes things that help me is looking around the room and naming or pointing at objects so it's focusing on something else. For me, personally, I like focusing on external things helps ground me, which is also why I like playing games on my phone at times.

But then again, the internal practices as well, as you say, deep breathing and imagining and things like that. So I think that's so important to bring in.

Melissa Douglass

Essentially, when we think about anxiety, it's so complicated but then it's so simple, too, because it's really rooted in our brains believing that we're safe and okay.

So all these different things that we talked about in regards to tools or coping measures or supportive resources and resourcing that we can do within our body, it's essentially for our brain and our body to be one and connected and say, yes, we're okay, we're good, we're fine. There's no immediate danger. We are safe.

And if we can remember that and focus on that and identify and determine what things do that for us, it allows for this very, sometimes complicated and distressing experience to become a lot more individualized and impactful and effective for us, too.

Jaia Bristow

Absolutely. Well, Melissa, I'm aware of time, but I'm hoping that this conversation has helped people normalize anxiety, understand a bit about where it comes from, what's happening in the brain, why it shows up, how it shows up, some of the symptoms and some coping skills.

And are excited to find out more about this conference because we have lots more fantastic speakers offering different skills and exercises, talking more about how it comes about and how to manage it.

How can we find out more about you and your work?

Melissa Douglass

Absolutely. So you can visit our website for my practice, which is goaldrivencounseling.com and I'd be happy to engage with anyone that comes to this conference.

Thank you all so much for this amazing resource to our community.

Jaia Bristow

Thank you. And I think you also do a lot of virtual work so people can come and work with you from wherever they're based?

[00:38:11] Melissa Douglass

Yeah. So, of course with therapy we still have licensing regulations that kind of prohibit, but yes, outside of my clinical practice, I work with other mental health therapists that are looking to integrate just virtual services, tele mental health, and grow virtual practices as well, too.

So that's also something to the work that I do that is super helpful. And it was super timely to be positioned in this way. My practice has been virtual for 5 years, so we were very in this space before the pandemic and it's been awesome to be able to support other clinicians that have had to make that transition and now they're trying to figure out, do I go back? Do I stay? And what works for me and my clientele? So I love doing that side of my work, too.

Jaia Bristow

Fantastic. I love that because it makes this work suddenly so much more accessible, which is also why we do these online conferences.

Thank you so much for your time today, Melissa. I really appreciate it.

Melissa Douglass

Thank you.