

Are you next for your Covid jab? Celebrity hypnotherapist reveals a 90% surge in calls to tackle needle phobia & reveals his best tips to tackle the problem

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The Government's mass vaccination programme against Covid-19 is continuing at pace.

However, while headlines about the jabs have been dominated by safety concerns, for many it is a fear of needles that is causing anxiety and extreme levels of upset.

The rollout has now moved on to people aged 32 or over and lower age groups are expected to be vaccinated in the coming weeks. As it stands, there is no alternative to the needle. All Covid-19 vaccines have to be given via injection.

For many this has proved a turning point in wanting to confront their needle phobia. Hypnotherapist, head of clinic at City Hypnosis, Aaron Surtees said he has seen a staggering 90% surge in calls asking for help to eliminate the problem following the start of the vaccination programme. The majority are young professionals who have had the problem since childhood.

He said: 'Before the Government announcement about Covid jabs it was not unusual for a year or a couple of years to pass before I would get a phone call asking for help to tackle needle phobia'.

'In the last 3 months, since the vaccine rollout started, I have had at least one phone call a week'.

'It has been an equal mix of males and females and they are in the 30s to 50s age group. A lot of them have had the problem for life but have been forced to confront their fears because of the vaccine'.

- So what can be done to tackle needle phobia & where does it stem from?

Mr Surtees believes the answer lies in a combination of treatments including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and clinical hypnotherapy.

The celebrity expert has treated a number of stars, including Ant McPartlin and Charlie Brooker and is regarded as the UK's most recommended hypnotherapist.

'A phobia of needles is essentially an irrational fear based on the rational need to protect the body and mind from suffering potential harm. People with needle phobia have a fear of pain, they fear lack of control and the fear that something bad will happen'.

'Needle phobia can originate from a bad medical experience but for the majority of people, when asked, will say they're not sure where it has come from, it is something that has always been with them'.

'Once people start the process of therapy they realise that often it stems from an incident that happened in childhood that turned into a massive deal and has gone into adulthood with them'.

'The good news is that all phobias can be completely eliminated depending on the person and their openness and willingness to change their mindset around their phobia whether it's needles or something else'.

Around three sessions of hypnotherapy and CBT are recommended said Mr Surtees: 'I have seen a high success rate with my clients. The first session will prime your brain to accept change and the following two sessions will reinforce the rewiring of the brain and the changes that are now the 'new normal'

when you see needles'.

'It is always best to see a qualified professional when undergoing hypnotherapy as they are best placed to know how to lead your mind to the right state to accept change and a new way of thinking'.

The 3-step process to overcoming needle phobia:

1. 'Recognising you have a needle phobia and want to tackle it is the most important starting point. Until you accept you have a problem and need to change you can't move forward with therapy'.
2. 'Become comfortable with the idea of needles being good and necessary. De-sensitise yourself by watching as many medical programmes as possible. This will help on a subconscious level'.
3. 'The steps above start the process of reprogramming your mind and allow you to reap the benefits of hypnotherapy and CBT. The process I like to use involves placing a client in a state of hypnosis and relaxation. Closing the mind's eye of a client makes them open to hypnotic suggestion. Through positive visualisations: picturing themselves without fear, relaxed and confident around needles combined with positive affirmations helps to start the journey of rewiring the mind'.

E: rebecca@rmpublicity.com for further information