

PANIC ATTACKS: THE SOARING EPIDEMIC AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

AS ACTRESS **EMMA STONE** REVEALS HER BATTLE WITH DEBILITATING ANXIETY, WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CONDITION

She may be one of the most successful film stars in the world, but Emma Stone has revealed her battle with 'immobilising' panic attacks. The *La La Land* actress opened up about suffering from crippling anxiety since childhood during a recent interview, saying: 'I was a very, very, very anxious child and I had a lot of panic attacks.'

Appearing on *The Late Show*, Emma, 28, shared a picture she had drawn in therapy aged just nine, which she had labelled: 'I'm bigger than my anxiety.' Meanwhile, she also confessed: 'The first time I had a panic attack I was sitting in my friend's house and I thought the house was burning down. I called my mum and she brought me home, and for the next three years it just would not stop.'

Although she no longer has the attacks, Emma admitted she still struggles with anxiety to this day. And she's not alone, as many other celebrities have spoken out about their own anxiety issues, including Peter Andre, 44, Adele, 29, and Zayn Malik, 24. Former *Great British Bake Off* winner Nadiya Hussein recently revealed that she too has a panic disorder, which makes almost every day hard to cope with. Nadiya, 32, said: 'My whole life revolves around not falling apart. I describe it as a monster. Some days the monster shouts in my face, no matter where I turn he will keep shouting at me, I can't get him out of my face.'

In addition, *Love Island* winner Kem Cetinay, 21, has opened up about the 'crippling anxiety' he endured during childhood. 'Anxiety can be a dark path if you don't handle it well,' he said. 'I basically had therapy seven days a week for three years.'

Away from showbiz, there are new claims that young women are facing a 'gathering crisis' in their mental health. NHS statistics show that outpatient appointments for anxiety disorders have rocketed by 500 per cent since 2007.

'There is a growing crisis in children and young people's mental health,' says Dr Bernadka Dubicka, chair of the Child & Adolescent faculty at

the Royal College of Psychiatrists. 'Emotional problems in young girls have been significantly, and very worryingly, on the rise over the past few years.'

With girls facing increasing doubts over their body image, as well as the intense pressure of social media, OK! found out more about the unprecedented rise of panic attacks – and how best to deal with them...

WHAT CAUSES AN ATTACK?

Panic attacks occur when a worrying thought triggers a sudden surge of the hormone adrenaline. Gearing itself up for imminent danger, the body goes into 'fight or flight' mode, sparking unpleasant symptoms such as shortness of breath.

Renowned psychotherapist Jasmine El-Doori tells OK!: 'All of us experience anxiety in certain situations, such as before a big exam or job interview. But with panic attacks, these feelings become uncontrollable.' Often, the fear of having an attack is a direct cause. 'If you've had a panic attack on the tube before, even the idea of getting back on it can bring on an attack.'

In that way, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy,' says Jasmine.

Associated feelings of self-doubt can then worsen the problem. 'Sometimes, people dash to A&E with an awful racing heart, only to be told there's nothing wrong with them. This compounds the feeling of failure and a sense they're not coping.'

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

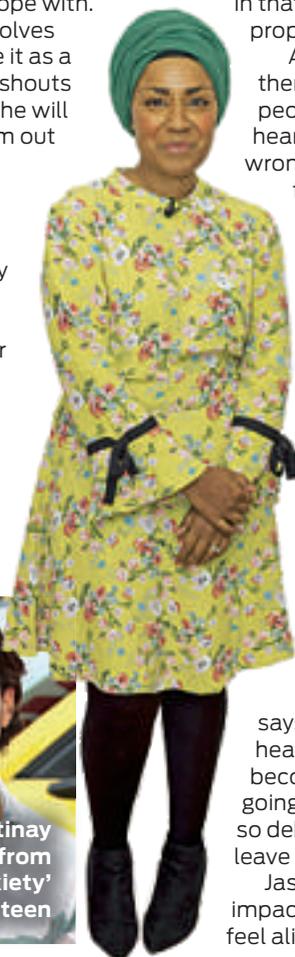
They vary in severity, but common complaints include a racing heart, nausea, palpitations, difficulty breathing, hot flushes, dizziness, muscle tension and pins and needles. In some cases, a sufferer's throat

constricts, which produces a choking sensation or even the feel of a cardiac arrest. 'A panic attack can be extremely distressing,' says Stephen Buckley from mental health charity Mind. 'For some people it becomes so severe they feel like they're going to die. For some, anxiety becomes so debilitating they choose not to leave the house.'

Jasmine added: 'The attacks can impact on your life to the point where you feel alienated from colleagues, family and



Above: Emma Stone has suffered from anxiety since childhood and drew this picture (below) in her therapy classes. **Far left:** Nadiya Hussain has a panic disorder



Kem Cetinay suffered from 'crippling anxiety' as a teen



friends. They leave people feeling incredibly isolated.'

WHY ARE PANIC ATTACKS ON THE INCREASE?

According to a study by the University Of Cambridge last year, more than 8.2 million young people in Britain struggle with anxiety or panic attacks, and females are twice as likely to be affected. With cases among younger generations rising fast,

experts believe that mounting social pressures are largely to blame. As Stephen says: 'A lot of people don't realise how stressful their lives have become. Slowly that stress builds and becomes more of an anxiety problem and more difficult to sort out.'

Jasmine stresses: 'The triggers are often around a big life transition – such as going to university, losing a job or the loss of a loved one. I'm treating far more young people than a decade ago. There's so much pressure to do well at school, as well as a fear of debt in these unstable economic times. There's terrible pressure to >

look a certain way, to have a huge number of friends on Facebook and to be in a relationship.'

Similarly, trolling on social media is having an impact. 'It's easy for people to make hasty and sometimes ill-advised comments that can negatively affect other people's mental health,' says Stephen.

On the flipside, the surge in recorded cases is also partly due to more of us confronting our problems head-on. 'One positive is that many more young people are seeking help,' Jasmine points out, adding: 'Information and professional support are more accessible, and there thankfully appears to be less shame associated with emotional turbulence.'

HOW ARE THEY BEST TREATED?

Many of those suffering from panic attacks turn to medication, such as antidepressants. 'The younger clients I see often race straight to the GP to get a prescription,' Jasmine says. 'Lots of them would clearly benefit from talking through their problems instead, although medication does come into its own when people's function is seriously impeded.'

Rather than using drugs, psychotherapy involves focusing on the root causes of anxiety. Jasmine insists: 'It's so important, and can stem back many years.' She also advocates yoga, meditation and mindfulness. 'Adolescents in particular rave about all the new apps that are available. Taking ten minutes out of the day to focus on breathing and keeping in the moment really helps.'

Visualisation techniques can be useful too, she says: 'Using the imagination to create reassuring scenes, such as lying on a beach, can be very soothing. My role is about empowering people to manage the situations they find themselves in.'

Other preventative strategies include eating regularly and avoiding dehydration, with Jasmine adding: 'Getting enough sleep is vital too, and it's important to have someone with you in situations that you know you'll struggle with. Feeling alone and helpless is all part of a panic attack so have someone who can ground you and bring you back to reality if you need it.'

VISIT WWW.PSYCHOTHERAPY4YOU.CO.UK.



Right: Adequate sleep is vital for mental health, as is staying hydrated (above inset)



Yoga, meditation and mindfulness are all ways to beat stress

CELEBRITIES WHO HAVE BATTLED PANIC ATTACKS

CHRIS HUGHES

Kem Cetinay isn't the only *Love Island* star to struggle with anxiety. Chris Hughes, 24, recently wrote on Instagram: 'It was about May 2013 when I finally overcame Anxiety and Panic Attacks, most sickening months of my life where you never know what you're guna do [sic].'



JAMES ARTHUR

The singer has been open about his daily battle. 'Anxiety is something very close to my heart,' he explained. 'It's something I suffer with daily. The most important thing is being aware of the triggers.'



ELLIE GOULDING

After her first panic attack, the singer, 30, thought she was 'dying'. She said: 'My heart was pounding; I thought I was having a heart attack. From that day, I kept having them. It got to the point when I couldn't get in the car to go to the studio.'



FRANKIE BRIDGE

TV presenter Frankie's anxiety once got so bad that she took six months off work. 'We all need to talk about it,' she said. 'People assume it's a rich person's illness.' **OK!**

REPORT BY ANNA POINTER HEATH BITES BY KIRSTY HATCHER, ROSIE UNDERWOOD, KATIE LANGFORD-FOSTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, FATCAMERA, GETTY IMAGES, KEVIN MAZUR, MIKE MARSLAND, MICHAEL TRAN, PA, RICHARD SPAREY, SHUTTERSTOCK, TETRA IMAGES

HEALTHBITES

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SURF'S UP

Muscular endurance, balance, total body strength and core stability are four requirements for surfing, which is why you rarely see surfers, male or female, without killer bodies! While waves are a bit harder to come by than a treadmill, celebrities such as Jennifer Lawrence, Rihanna and Reese Witherspoon are all getting on board (left).



Make like them with Surf Sistas, which offers fun and accessible ladies-only surf retreats in Cornwall and Wales, as well as Costa Rica, Bali, Morocco, Ibiza and France. Visit www.surfsistas.com.

SUPERMODEL DIET SECRETS

Miranda Kerr's former personal chef, Kate McAloon, has revealed the model's daily meal plan. The 34 year old (below) eats healthily 80 per cent of the time. Breakfast would be superfood chia pudding, followed by a lunch of salmon with vegetables or a courgette and tomato salad. She'd snack on guacamole and hummus with crudités, followed by a light curry or roast chicken with tamari and lemon for dinner.



BE HAPPY

It's the simple things in life that make us happy, according to a new poll by UKTV's W Channel, dubbed The Happiness Index. Kissing and cuddling is our favourite simple pleasure, with sharing a laugh with loved ones coming a close second. Other



activities to make the list include helping others, stroking a pet (left), hearing from an old friend and enjoying a lazy Sunday.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BONES

With World Osteoporosis Day approaching on October 20, it's time to take our bone health seriously. Hollywood star Gwyneth Paltrow has revealed she suffers from osteopenia (early signs of bone loss), while three million people in the UK currently suffer from osteoporosis itself. Experts recently revealed that a new drug to treat the condition might not be far away. In the meantime, try supplements such as Vitabiotics Osteocare [right] and Healthspan's Osteo Complete, which contain vitamins and minerals, like magnesium, vitamin D, calcium and zinc to maintain bone health.



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