

I'm a 22-year-old who has been dealing with anxiety for long time.

I'd say I'm an anxious person in general and can get worked up about anything. But it was pretty much in control till December.

My family and I went through a very devastating incident which left me quite broken. ***I lost my father due to heart attack.***

It all just happened very suddenly and the worst part was he had been away from home for sometime. He was supposed to be back in a few days but couldn't due to bad weather. I know all this from the last conversation I had with him. The next thing I knew he was hospitalized. Things escalated pretty quickly and within two days he was no more.

I couldn't believe it. I was beyond shattered. I just saw my entire life crumble down. I couldn't breathe. I was extremely attached to my father; he was my wall. To me, my entire world revolved around him. His death left this void in me which I knew would only get bigger and bigger and at this point I just regretted not being next to him.

I just wish I was there when he took his last breath. I had these thoughts and question in my head which agitated me over the time. I wanted to know what he felt, was he in pain. But more than anything what were his last thoughts.

I couldn't sleep for the next few days all I did was cry. I was told once I get busy with my everyday routine it would get better with time. I still had breakdowns horrible ones. I wasn't the same person anymore. I hated everyone.

I was really trying hard to fix myself, not for myself but for the people around me who loved me.

Before it could get any better, there was a pandemic followed by complete lockdown. Not the best for your mental health. That's when things got worse.

I had all this time, where all I did was constantly think about my father. I was stuck in a loop of, what ifs and whys. It was a nightmare which lasted for 6-7 months.

I had completely lost my sleep, I was cranky, easily irritated, zero motivation. Almost everything triggered me. I lost interest in everything, I just hated

everyone, I had started isolating myself from everyone. I had a breakdown almost every day.

All of it left me exhausted and I was scared. I feared my own self. It felt like it would never get better, the void in me would only get bigger and swallow me one day.

That's when I decided I needed help. So, my sister introduced me to Geeta and honestly the first time I spoke to her I already had started feeling better. She was always so reassuring and friendly and for a person like me who finds it difficult to open up, she made it all easy.

I had like 4 to 5 sessions with her and that's all it took for me to feel like myself again.

Geeta first understood my thought process and assured me that it would all get better. She didn't tell me that it would all go away, but she explained that, I would learn to deal with it better. This was really important for me to understand.

Then we spoke about my triggers and symptoms and accordingly she helped me overcome them with some simple exercises which included taking deep breaths.

She told me to just cry as much as I want for three days and miss my father as much as I want and then release all my emotions on a pillow.

She also asked me to keep a check on my symptoms; I had a checklist with all my symptoms and I'd rate them accordingly.

She told me that what I needed was to let go of the string of attachment and try to connect to my father's soul and honestly it was the most helpful thing.

She gave me options on how I could fulfil my needs and personally what worked for me was writing letters to my papa. I'd do it whenever I felt really low or when I wanted to really feel his presence around it really made me feel better.

Other than this there was talking to yourself in the mirror, journaling or scribbling your thoughts.

And for my sleep she suggested I listen to some calm and soothing music which did help.

The one that really stuck with me was hugging the pillow and imagining I was hugging my father. It really felt comforting. I would just vent it all out.

Apart from these just venting out to someone you're very close to and trust completely with your vulnerability can be helpful too. That's something I did all throughout my journey and still continue to do the same.

What I needed apart from all this was ways to keep myself busy. Since I was so disinterested in almost everything, I decided to give cooking a try. Turns out cooking can be very therapeutic. I just learned of ways to pamper myself a little and tried to do things which made me happy.

What I feel the most important part of my journey was to be kind and patient with myself. I needed to give myself time to heal and believe that I could. I'm glad to say I learnt to manage my anxiety and grief and all my symptoms are all under control. I sleep well and my breakdowns have reduced to a great level but I still have my days, but that's okay.

It all gets better eventually. I know I'm stronger than this and can overcome it all.