

## Beating BDD Episode 7 – Alex Mummery

Alex's BDD started at around 13 after a friend made a comment about the shape of his head. After 10 years of growing his hair long to disguise the perceived flaw, he did a course of CBT alongside his own exposure therapy. Now, he exposes his head to the world every day and says his BDD is no longer a problem.

*'Now, I'm always the confident version of me, because I'm not pinning of all my identify on the way I look. So even if I look in the mirror and feel dissatisfied, I still walk away from it a confident person.'*

### How is Alex now?

[00:00.51] His BDD now causes him next to no anxiety.

[00:03.35] Through studying educational psychology he's learnt that BDD sufferers process visual data differently, which makes them very detail-focused.

[00:06.27] It's okay not to be 100% satisfied with the way you look as long as it doesn't cause you any anxiety or disrupt your everyday existence.

[00:22.22] Recovery has allowed him to make other positive changes in his life.

[00:26.32] He can control any compulsions better now, and 95% of the time, the intrusive thoughts aren't there at all.

### When did his BDD appear and how did it manifest itself?

[00:06.54] A friend told Alex he had a funny-shaped head, which over time became an all-consuming obsession.

[00:08.48] While he was always able to function, for 10 years he had at least a low level of anxiety along with big peaks.

[00:10.50] He did often think about surgery but didn't go ahead with it.

[00:12.55] He never revealed the extent of his obsession to his family – in fact, they thought he was vain.

[00:25.56] The intrusive thoughts were nearly almost there.

### What caused Alex to seek treatment?

[00:15.15] At 25, the end of a long-term relationship caused a big spike in symptoms.

[00:16.14] When he started meeting new people again, he began to realise that others didn't see him the way he did.

[00:17.00] The experience made Alex think he'd like to get rid of the anxiety. So he went to the GP and was given CBT.

### What form did it take?

[00:17.15] It wasn't BDD-specific CBT but did lead the symptoms to improve.

[00:18.19] Alex did his own exposure therapy by cutting his hair off gradually.

[00:19.37] When he shaved his head completely, and the world didn't end, it changed how he saw himself. The checking and comparing went away too.

### What advice would he give to others?

[00:27.47] No one is stuck with BDD for life. It's hard to face up to your fears but if you do, you will get better.

## Resources

- The BDD Foundation: [bddfoundation.org](http://bddfoundation.org)

