What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of worry, fear, nervousness and apprehension. Every person experiences some level of anxiety as a part of life.. When faced with potentially harmful or worrying triggers, feelings of anxiety are not only normal but necessary for survival.

Anxiety becomes a problem when it disrupts your day to day life and prevents you from doing things you used to enjoy. Anxiety disorders occur when a reaction is out of proportion to what might normally be expected in a situation. The American Psychological Association (APA) describes a person with anxiety disorder as "having recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns." If you aren't sure if you or someone you care about is experiencing normal feelings of anxiety or severe anxiety that may need medical attention there are many resources to find your pathway to support. Start by talking about it and reaching out to a mental health care professional. You can also visit www.angstmovie.com for a list of resources.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health complaint in the United States. As we see in the film, the kids and teens interviewed shared their different experiences with anxiety. Dr. Cora Bruener describes the additional physical symptoms that can accompany anxiety disorders, like chronic stomach or head aches. The APA classifies anxiety disorders into six main types. These include:

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): creates chronic, everyday worry, sometimes consuming hours of a person's day. Can create physical symptoms of headaches and stomach aches.

Social Anxiety Disorder: more than shyness, a person with social anxiety disorder has intense fear over social interactions, causing them to withdraw and not participate. Often people who suffer from this are very concerned about being judged

Panic Disorder: characterized by panic attacks and sudden feelings of terror that sometime strike repeatedly and without warning. People experiencing a panic attack often mistake them for a heart attack because of the powerful physical symptoms including chest pain, heart palpitations, dizziness, sweaty hands, shortness of breath and stomach upset.

Phobias: We all have certain things or situations that make us uncomfortable or fearful. But a person with a phobia experiences strong, irrational fear over certain places, objects or events.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD): is an anxiety condition in which a person is plagued by unwanted thoughts, images or impulses (called obsessions) that he/she attempts to fend off or neutralize by performing compulsions (ritualized or repeated behaviors).

Separation anxiety disorder: This is characterized by high levels of anxiety when separated from a person or place that provides feelings of security or safety. Separation sometimes results in panic symptoms. It is considered a disorder when the response is excessive or inappropriate after separation.

Fact: Anxiety disorders are treatable.

Fact: Neuroplasticity of the brain is real. You can change the way you think about something. You can rewire your brain to positivity.

Fact: Distraction allows your amygdala (fight or flight part of the brain) a break. It can be helpful to distract your mind and give yourself some space for a short period, but prolonged isolation can lead to avoidance of anxiety producing situations which reinforces the negative thought process.

Tips for Managing Anxiety

- Distract yourself.

Text a friend	Listen to music
Read a book for 5 mins	Listen to the quietness of a room
Snap fingers back and forth	Try pushups or jumping jacks
Write your feelings in a journal	Focus on your breath

- Think of the logic of the situation.
Example from a teen in Angst: You have a test you are anxious about. You know you studied, you will get at least half right, this test will not define your future.

- Take your mind into a place where you feel safe and/or special. Such as...

The beach	A lake
A field	The mountains
Your room	A forest

- Try Ice cubes in your hand. This will take you out of your anxiety and panic. Your focus will be on the ice cubes and you will move from the fight or flight part of the brain to the frontal lobe, the more rational, thinking part of the brain.

- Focus on looking at your hands and then focus on the floor. Go back and forth- focus close up on your hands and then adjust your focus to the ground. This will help shift the brain into another place.

- Don't avoid. Rise and fall in the perceived threat.

- Talk to someone. Let your loved ones know if you are feeling stressed. Talking about it helps you reframe your concern and increase your opportunity for support.

If you're unsure whether your anxiety has reached a level of being unhealthy, reach out to a mental health professional. Visit AngstMovie.com for resources like websites, videos, books, find a therapist and more...

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