

Angst

ANXIETY DISORDERS *are* REAL, COMMON *and* TREATABLE

We all have Anxiety, but how much is too much?

... let's talk about it!

Film Screening & Panel Discussion

Angst | ... let's talk about it!

Anxiety isn't cool - talking about it is

You get a common cold, no big deal. Your cold gets worse, you now have pneumonia, what do you do? Of course you go to the doctor. Why do we treat anxiety different? You experience mild anxiety due to an upcoming test, no big deal. Your anxiety gets worse, you are now isolated in your room and withdrawn from your friends, what do you do? Too often we do nothing and say nothing. We all have anxiety, but how much is too much?

Anxiety disorders are the #1 mental health challenge in the U.S., with age seven being the median age of onset, according to the World Health Organization, and tweens and teens can be especially vulnerable. This time of year can be particularly tough for young people with the stress of the holidays and the pressure of college applications and decisions. Often, those who experience extreme anxiety feel ashamed and suffer in silence but the good news is that there is hope because anxiety disorders are highly treatable. Below are some common signs from experts associated with Angst that kids struggling with anxiety may exhibit, as well as tips on how to respond.

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.

Angst | ... let's talk about it!

Tips for Managing Your Anxiety

- **Distract yourself.**

- Text a Friend
- Read a book for 5 minutes
- Snap fingers back and forth
- Write your feelings in a journal
- Listen to music
- Listen to the quietness of a room
- Try pushups or jumping jacks
- 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.

- **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.

Angst | ... let's talk about it!

Spotting & Supporting Anxiety

- Changes in grades or school being more stressful than usual
- Withdrawal from social interaction, avoidance and isolation from family members and friends
- Increased complaints of headaches or stomach aches, especially in the morning before school or activities
- Repeated and repetitive attempts to gain reassurance

5 Ways to Support Your Teen's Mental Health

1 Validate your teen's emotional pain

2 Educate yourself about how the body reacts to anxiety

3 Create an environment that encourages facing fears

4 Model vulnerability "its ok to not be ok"

5 Consider extra help from professionals

For more resources and information, please visit: www.adaa.org

ADAA ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Angst | ... let's talk about it!

How to Help a Friend & Lift the Stigma

Having supportive and understanding friends is an essential component to recovering from an anxiety disorder. How can you help?

- **Educate yourself** - Understanding what your friend is going through will help you better support them. It will also help alleviate frustrations that you may have about their behavior.
- **Be supportive** - Encourage your friend when they are having a tough time and be empathetic to what they are going through. Be respectful but do not support avoidance of stressful situations.
- **Don't try to change your friend** - Accept your friend for who they are.
- **Communicate** - Be sure to listen with a nonjudgmental attitude. Help them find treatment. Sometimes it's hard to take the first step alone. Be a good support and encourage your friend to get help.
- **Encourage** - Encourage your friend to confront stressful situations and support them through the experience, rather than avoiding anxiety-provoking situations. Avoidance can actually make the anxiety disorder worse.
- **Be fun** - Sure it's good to have someone to talk to, but your friends need you to keep the fun going. Help make them laugh and relax.
- **Visit angstmovie.com** - Resources and information including videos, articles and websites.

Angst | ... let's talk about it!

Support Available to You

CALL	National Suicide Hotline (800) 784-2433
TEXT	Talk to 741741 (Crisis text line free 24/7)
CALL	Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK (8255)
FIND	suicidepreventionlifeline.org
FIND	Mental Health Provider: findtreatment.samhsa.gov
FIND	mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-help
FIND	Angstmovie.com/resources
CALL	Your company EAP program
CONTACT	A Local Youth Group, Counselor or Trusted Adult

Much of the information on anxiety in this handout was provided by IndieFlix Foundation.

If you are unsure whether your anxiety has reached a level of being unhealthy, please speak to a mental health professional.

AngstMovie.com for resources like websites, videos, books, therapist finder and more.