

## Anxiety in youths subject of documentary film screening

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A film about anxiety in young people is being screened in Oakville.

IndieFlix, an independent online streaming platform, along with its non-profit arm, the IndieFlix Foundation, is screening a new documentary, *Angst: Raising Awareness Around Anxiety*.

On Wednesday, May 9, Fitness for Mental Health, which has representatives in Toronto and Oakville, will hold a special screening of the documentary at Film.ca Cinemas to open up a dialogue between local families, community leaders and experts.

The event will feature speakers followed by a viewing of the 56-minute film.

In addition to the documentary, an exclusive virtual reality (VR) component will allow users to experience a panic attack firsthand, intended to engender awareness and empathy for anxiety sufferers.

The VR component, directed by Stephanie Riggs, has been developed with support from Google as a supplemental learning aid to the documentary.

Through candid interviews, *Angst* producers Scilla Andreen and Karin Gornick tell the stories of many kids and teenagers who discuss their anxiety and its impacts on their lives and relationships, as well as how they've found solutions and hope.

The film also includes an interview with multiple gold medal-winning U.S. Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, a mental health advocate. Phelps has been open about his struggles with anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts.

"The conversation surrounding mental health really hits home for me," said Phelps. "Many people don't understand how debilitating mental illness truly can be, and even more than that how common it is, yet people are afraid to have the serious discussions about it."

"I welcomed the opportunity to be a part of *Angst* to further the dialogue around mental health and to help people understand the impact anxiety has on our mental state and encourage people, especially kids, to ask for help," Phelps added.

"Part of the beauty of this film is the openness of the children and young adults featured; for some of them the *Angst* project marks the first time they are publicly sharing their experiences with anxiety. Our hope is that their candidness and bravery will inspire our community to do the same," said Andreen.

In addition to the interviews with youths, the documentary provides discussions with mental health experts about the causes of anxiety and its sociological effects, along with the help, resources and tools available to address the condition.



IndieFlix photo

**A film about anxiety in youths entitled *Angst* is being screened in Oakville on May 9 at Film.ca Cinema.**

"Everybody needs to know that anxiety disorders are real, common and treatable instead of viewing them as a personal choice or something to be ashamed of," said Dr. Jerry Burbick, senior director of anxiety disorders centre at the Child Mind Institute in New York City.

"Getting help early is crucial in giving people the tools they need to feel better. We just need to

start the conversation."

Event host Fitness for Mental Health is raising funds to support ongoing mental health programming in Oakville. All proceeds raised from the film screening will go toward providing individual and group support in the community.

The film is expected to reach more than three million people around the world, through 25,000

community and school screenings.

"Fitness for Mental Health is willing to work with Halton school boards to bring the program to schools," said Jodie Becker, founder of Fitness for Mental Health.

The program is mobile and also goes to work offices, community homes, hospitals and individual homes.

Fitness for Mental Health is a non-profit organization borne from firsthand experience navigating the mental health-care system.

"We recognize that there is a need to support individuals and communities by delivering fitness as treatment, and as an integral part of the journey to recovery," said Becker.

"We operate on evidence-based programming, delivering 30 or more minutes of unique and customized fitness experiences for our clients and the communities in which we operate."

"In addition to working with our clients to improve their everyday lives, we operate as an advocate for mental health funding and awareness," Becker added.

Tickets to the screening are available but seating is limited. The *Angst* screening will be held at Film.ca Cinema, 171 Speers Rd., in Oakville. There is a 6:30 p.m. family screening and an 8 p.m. VIP screening.

For tickets, go to <https://bit.ly/2HN9lXy>.



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