**Angst: Documentary on Middle School and HIgh School Anxiety. Cameo with Michael Phelps**

**October 2, 2018 Odyssey School**

* The documentary began by having a variety of students describe how paralysing it is to function with anxiety. MOst of the students talked about how hard it is to hide from people and that takes up so much of their energy. They really don’t want to worry their parents or their friends. That said, they found that talking actually helps! Name it to tame it. Once they share with someone that they have anxiety, the pressure of hiding it is off. Some students even get to the point where they can joke about it. Then they own it as opposed to the other way around. It also helps parents to realize that the child isn’t just being dramatic.
* The clinicians stress that the brain has a lot of neuroplasticity and you can retrain it.
* What helps?
1. Distraction: Taking the process from the amygdala (feelings) to the frontal lobe (thinking). If your fingers are folded over your thumb, think of the fingers as the thinking part of your brain and the thumb as the feeling part. When you fingers pop up and just the emotions are exposed, you are left with nothing but raw emotion. Some of the techniques that the students described are:
2. Hold your hand in front of you and alternate focusing on your fingers and then the floor behind them.
3. Listen to the ticking of a clock.
4. Go to the beach in your mind.
5. Text someone, even if it isn’t about what you are anxious about.
6. Hold a fidget.
7. Alternate snapping your fingers quickly in a pattern.
8. Focusing on your breathing.
9. Hold ice cubes.
10. Journal.

 2. Use a rating scale of 1-10 or 1-100, whatever works for you.

 3. Exposure therapy to be used under the guidance of a trained therapist.

 (Speaking in public, flying, etc.)

 4. If you do not use anything, you will find your life begin to shrink as you pull away

 From experiences because of your anxiety.

* There are basic core fears, and once you recognize yours, you can find a treatment that works for you. They are: rejection, abandonment, failure and inadequacy.
* Recognize that in your anxiety is something that you care about and work with that. If you have social anxiety, chances are the fact that relationships are important to you.
* The clinicians said that the best treatment slices the situation very thinly so that you have very small slices to work with...therefore you are increasing your chances of small successes along the way. Build on that. Also know that hearing and sharing stories with empathy can make a difference; it makes the journey more tolerable. If you proceed with treatment in a slow and deliberate pace, you will have greater chances for success. Don’t push too fast!
* The site angstmovie.com has resources and tools.
* Two commonly used scales for anxiety are:
1. YBOCS for OCD and
2. BAI- Beck’s Anxiety Inventory.