

The Anxious vs. The World

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Intended Running Time: 5-10 minutes

Format: Online Video

Target Audience: Older teenagers and young adults aged 16-25 with an interest in mental health

Overview

The subject of this documentary is anxiety in all its forms (including OCD and Generalized Anxiety Disorder), its treatment and its public perception. It will be shot in a performative style with some elements of expository documentaries. Hope in the face of adversity is the overarching theme of the documentary. The intended outcome is increased awareness/understanding, and empowerment of the audience to seek help, concerning mental health issues like anxiety.

USP

This film is different from others tackling similar subjects because, alongside the external accounts, it is the story of one person's growth. The host seeks to know more about something that has affected her, in the hope that she will feel less alone.

Target Audience:

As mentioned before, the target audience for this documentary is older teenagers and young people aged 16-25 with an interest in mental health. I believe this is a viable audience to attract because adolescence and young adulthood are confusing and troubling stages of development for various reasons. Perhaps the audience would find comfort in that mental illness is more common than they might think.

Statement Proving Need

I came up with the idea for this project because anxiety is having a huge impact on my life following a tragic event. Therefore, I want to explore this condition in greater detail and see how it impacts sufferers and those who support them.

TREATMENT:

The host will begin the first act by introducing herself through voiceover and talking about the death of one of her many aunts. Consequently, this has caused her to worry irrationally about her health. Over this, the audience will see footage of her getting breakfast and trying to sleep – the footage should have a home video feel to it and the latter idea would be a reconstruction of how it can look on a bad night. Her mother will talk to camera (in her bedroom) about how profoundly the feelings of anxiety have affected her child. The host then talks to other people with anxiety to discuss the causes and effects, after segueing with voiceover again about her newly heightened curiosities about anxiety. The music throughout the documentary is thin in texture; pianos are a recurring instrument. Here, it is notably somber in tone. Act two will be spurred by the host's account of how a GP visit has helped her gain some perspective. We should hopefully see the inside of the doctor's office that she visited, alongside an interview with the doctor she saw. If said interview was filmed, the footage will appear in-between shots of the building. If it was conducted over email, it will appear in the form of text graphics over the footage and the host will narrate the answers she got. She then interviews support professionals for whom cases like hers are part of the job. There may also be news archive footage of how the healthcare sector is becoming overwhelmed by the increase in diagnoses of mental illnesses. Here, the music is almost non-existent, a few notes at most. Act three concerns the host's curiosity about anxiety in the public eye. She asks her interviewees (as in, the footage will return to earlier interviews) and then a large proportion of the cast offer messages of encouragement and support to the audience. Vox pops may also be included in this section – the host will ask shoppers on a busy street a question or two, and their answers will be relayed in quick succession. If a recurring word is used in relation to a certain point, that may be emphasized and repeated. In the ending, the host will be seen sat in a park as she reflects on what she has discovered and concludes her discoveries on anxiety. The music will be noticeably more hopeful, if bittersweet, than in previous acts. Pan to sky, roll credits. A licensed song may be used here.

Prospective Shooting Timeline

Day 1: Home footage and interview with host's mother at Elmgrove Court, roughly 7PM

Day 2: Capture footage of GP Practice, mid-day (allowance permitting)

Day 3: Vox Pops on the high street.

Time permitting, other interviews with individuals with anxiety may be conducted on college grounds

Personnel

For this project, I will require a cinematographer (Callum Smith), sound operator (Archie Jones) and a producer (Sophie Shah).

Legal & Ethical Considerations

From a legal and ethical standpoint, I will have to ask if the interviewees would like their identities shown to the public. This is especially important when talking to those affected because they might be worried about the stigma around mental health that, sadly, still exists. This is in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 8 states that "Everyone has the right to respect for [their] private and family life". Asking someone to discuss a subject that they would consider private would be restricting this right. As a result, I will require my interviewees to sign consent forms before their contributions are broadcast. In addition, I will give contributors the right to remain totally anonymous; their words can be spoken by voiceover and their face can be blurred out, as well as their name being changed. I will also need to present the stories of the affected as sensitively as possible. In the making of this documentary, I will be exercising my Freedom of Speech but understand that I have a duty of care to represent those affected by mental illness in an appropriate way. Ultimately, I wish to encourage audience members affected by anxiety and other mental illnesses to seek support. Furthermore, the Data Protection Act 2018 states that information about living persons must be "used for specified, explicit purposes" and "kept for no longer than is necessary". It also states that stronger levels of protection are in place for data that concerns a person's health. I would assume that mental health falls under this umbrella term. I therefore need to make clear to contributors exactly what their stories will be used for and I will not keep their records in archive beyond distribution unless necessary or if permitted to do so by the contributor. In addition, prior to the distribution of the documentary, I will contact contributors to offer to show them the finished short film. This will give them the opportunity to request revisions concerning their representation. Of course, they have the right to decline. This could also serve as a test audience to guarantee the project's quality. Finally, I must ensure that no harm befalls anyone who decides to get involved. I would consider offering a counselling service to all participants to do this. Talking about one's mental health is difficult, and people deal with it in different ways. As a creative, I have a duty of care to the participants before, during and after their involvement in the project. If their contribution has been a distressing experience, they can rest assured that someone will be on hand to listen.

Distribution Plans

This documentary is intended for showcase on BBC iPlayer as a BBC Three documentary. This platform is popular among the target audience and is known for tackling social issues such as mental health, so it is the ideal place for a documentary like this. Ideally, the documentary could be promoted via trailers and advertising bumpers on the BBC network. Social media pages may also come into play for advertising.