

Beneath The Stigma

An immersive short film to mark World Mental Health Day.
Watch it on SBS at 11am, Monday October 10th, and then on SBS On Demand

In the first year of the pandemic alone, anxiety and depression increased by 25 per cent according to the World Health Organisation.

Nearly everyone is either impacted by anxiety or knows someone who is.

Beneath The Stigma is a unique way of seeing and hearing the reality of anxiety, fusing candid testimonies with a live improvised jazz soundtrack. Musicians interpret the stories, bringing them to life.

Those testimonies come from a wide cross section of Australian communities.

One of our most prominent businessmen Tony de Leede, who founded the Fitness First chain, talks about the impact anxiety mental health issues have had on his life.

“It was pretty scary, you know, to the point where I even thought once or twice, as I lived on Bondi Beach, I thought if I didn't have a wife and kids, you know, I might even be tempted to go for a swim and just keep swimming. “

Then there's Dr Mark Cross, a consultant psychiatrist, first introduced to our screens through the ABC series Changing Minds, which told the story of patients in the Mental Health Units at Liverpool and Campbelltown Hospitals. He's also written a best selling book on Anxiety. Those telling their stories in the film all feature in his book.

“There's even more stigma to having anxiety as a doctor, as a weakness than being gay. It's about dealing with self-stigma first. That is the worst kind of stigma. It's the worst kind of stigma. And it sits with you and erodes you and impacts your interaction with others.”

The contemporary jazz is provided by Sydney based trio *States Of Chaos* who respond to the interview material with original compositions, which are then woven skilfully into the footage by award winning director Hugh Clark.

“There was a magical kind of symbiosis between the musicians and participants with lived experience, ultimately finding a way inside the experience of anxiety and other mental health issues, and the collected experience of those living with them.”

The film is raw and heart wrenching but also filled with hope.

View the trailer here

<https://vimeo.com/366388632>

Hi res stills available on request, as are interviews with the director and cast.

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