

Participate in Research: Adapting Anxiety Intervention for Youth with Autism for Rapid Response to COVID19: A Research Project to Provide and Evaluate Virtual Mental Health Care



Autism Research Centre at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is researching a group virtual anxiety intervention for children and teens with Autism.

What is this study about?

We are currently studying whether a group therapy program called Facing Your Fears (FYF), will help to reduce anxiety in children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). FYF is a modified cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) program for children and youth with ASD experiencing significant anxiety symptoms. We will provide everything virtually (through a platform called "Zoom for Healthcare") so that anyone can participate in this study from home!

Who can participate?

- Children and teens between **8 and 13 years old**
- Diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Have a heightened level of anxiety symptoms (i.e. worries or fears)
- Must be verbal/ conversational at a Grade 2 level or above
- Must be able to read at a Grade 2 level or above

**An initial screening assessment will be conducted to ensure eligibility for the program*

What's involved?

- The group consists of 12 weekly virtual sessions
- Parent and child participation are required each week
- Each session is approximately 1 to 1.5 hours (30-45 minutes with parents & children; 30-45 minutes parents alone)
- There will be 2 check-in calls with each family
- The group focuses on helping children and their parents identify worries, develop coping strategies and practice managing anxiety
- Participants are asked to complete questionnaires at the beginning and conclusion of the program

Potential Benefits?

- Online FYF group sessions may help reduce anxiety symptoms
- This research may also help other children and families with ASD who are experiencing feelings of anxiety

Potential Risks?

- You may feel tired, bored or uncomfortable answering questionnaires, doing weekly homework or participating in discussions that talk about your anxiety symptoms (i.e. worries or fears)

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Date Posted:

Version Date:
[2.0] 27 Dec 2020

REB No. 0240

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