

Managing School Refusal POST COVID



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Professional Learning!

Are you a professional attending tonight's webinar?

Would you like a certificate of attendance for your professional body?

- Please answer the following questions and email to reception@bcbm.com.au and we will forward you a certified certificate.

1) What are 3 causes of school refusal?

2) What are 3 of the characteristics of task and demand avoidance?

3) What are 3 strategies you can use to support a young person struggling to return to school?

Why refuse to go to school when you can finally go?

ANXIETY ANXIETY
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Feeling sick, vomiting, pale, headache

Fear of unknown

Haven't been engaged with online learning and fear of consequence

Fear of seeing friends face to face

Will I know what to say, I have changed will my friends still like me



What is school avoidance?

Finding excuses to be late for school or to be collected early

Feeling sick, vomiting, pale, headache

Excessive concern and focus on wellbeing of friends

Sleep inversion and unable to get up, not being able to go to sleep at night

Going to sick bay, toilet or wellbeing - a lot

Forgetting things that are critical for their day (books, lunch, bus pass) and requiring you come to the school



What is school refusal?

The act of putting more energy into not getting to school each day than it would take to go to school

Feeling sick, vomiting, pale, headache

Sleep inversion and unable to get up, Not being able to go to sleep at night

Melting or Shutting down

Starting an argument that is so intense that all concerned are left exhausted



What is Task and Demand Avoidance?

The act of putting more energy into avoiding doing a task than it actually takes to do the task

Asking the same question over and over

Banging or bumping self and having an over the top response

Going to the loo for 100000000 minutes

Starting an argument



Anxiety

Confusing for parents
and teachers

Initially unpredictable

You don't know what
you don't know

Consider obvious
antecedents

Not intentional/ not
malicious

Understanding reduces
your stress



Anxiety

Normal and reasonable response to our current setting

- Real and perceived threats
- World being a scary and unpredictable place
- Misunderstanding and misreading cues and norms
- Bullying and teasing
- Misunderstood, judged, sanctioned and punished
- Sensory processing issues and sensory over stim or under stim
- Demand avoidance

Different Anxiety disorders

The six common types of anxiety disorders are:

- **Generalised anxiety disorder** - is excessive, uncontrollable worry about a range of ordinary situations like health, work or finances.
- **Social phobia** - causes people to avoid social or performance situations for fear of being embarrassed or rejected.
- **Panic disorder** - is associated with regular panic attacks, which are sudden intense episodes of irrational fear, shortness of breath, dizziness and other physical symptoms.
- **Agoraphobia** - is often associated with panic disorder, and involves avoiding certain situations due to fear of having a panic attack.
- **Specific phobias** - are irrational fears that only apply to one particular situation, such as a fear of animals, insects, places or people (for example claustrophobia is a specific fear of enclosed or confined spaces).
- **Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)** - involves unwanted thoughts and impulses (obsessions), causing repetitive, routine behaviours (compulsions) as a way of coping with anxiety.
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** - when feelings of fear or avoidance do not fade after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic life event.

Other presentations of Anxiety

- Anticipatory anxiety – awfulize and catastrophise
- Delayed anxiety
- Sensory responses
- Demand avoidance
- School refusal
- Intense, intractable special interests
- IT addiction and obsession and resultant meltdowns
- Asthma, eczema and food intolerances and allergies
- PDAS/ODD

Myths about Juvenile Anxiety

- It is the parent's fault
- Just naughty, it is the child's choice
- Requires discipline
- They don't try hard enough
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Ignore it
- Make them do it
- Avoidance is helpful
- Ignore their questions
- Reassurance feeds it
- We are enablers
- Takes years to see treatments help
- Medication is addictive
- This is a life sentence

Theory of Mind

Ability to imagine what someone else might be feeling and moderating your behaviour in response

Ability to predict and interpret others behaviour

Unable to imagine how someone else feels

Unable to experience empathy

Assumption you don't know how they feel until they make you experience it

Often laugh with relief and leave you or another child in a puddle on the floor



Capacity versus Ability

- Frustrating
- Confusing
- Misunderstood
- Family breakdown and conflict
- Attunement
- Communication

**May become easily upset or
angered**

Feel under
pressure

Worry about
things

Feel anxious
most of the time

Increases when
asked to do
something



Supports

Understand why a child behaves in the way they do

Great relationships with school

Makes their lives a bit easier

Makes your life easier too

Encouragement



Finish the year well

Negotiate with school

Outside support

Reduced hours

Reduced workload

Explicit Skills



Explicit skills

Mindfulness

Therapy

Breathing
activities

Distress and
boredom
tolerance skills

Psychology,
Counselling
ACT



Identity and success outside of school

Sports and recreation

Peers and friends

Sport, self defence
and swimming

Tinkering, online
short courses,
cake decorating,
anime drawing
and cooking

Discord, visits,
sleepovers, Little
Dreamers, Aspect



Support for you

Carer Gateway, EACH, Little Dreamers,
Mirabel, Create, FRMP, NDIS

Peers and friends

Counselling,
respite, cleaning,
yard work, skips

Young carer, Out
of home care and
sibling support

Go have a coffee,
go for a walk or
swim. Fill your
cup!!!!



Question & Answer Time

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