



Evidence-Based Intervention – Parent-led CBT (Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries)

1. Introduction

The parent-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programme 'Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries', is based on the book by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts (2019). It is designed to help parents understand their child's anxiety, providing a clear, straightforward step-by-step approach to help parents help their child.

2. Purpose of Intervention

The programme aims to equip parents with CBT tools to help their child manage anxiety, reduce avoidance behaviours, and improve emotional regulation and coping strategies.

3. Target Audience

Parents of children aged 7–12 who are experiencing mild anxiety, including anxiety around attending school, separating from a parent, social worries, and generalised anxiety.

4. Who Can Deliver the Intervention

The intervention can be delivered by trained facilitators. Involvement in the program can be as part of a group or supported individually.

5. Session Structure

The programme typically consists of 6-8 weekly sessions, usually online. Each session covers topics such as understanding anxiety, identifying fears, setting goals, exposure tasks, managing parental responses, and building resilience.

6. Frequency and Duration

Sessions are held weekly, with each session lasting approximately 20-60 minutes. The programme spans 6-8 weeks.

7. Key Principles

Key CBT principles include cognitive restructuring through gradual exposure to perceived feared situations, parental modelling of reasoned calm responses, and behavioural scenarios to test anxious thoughts.

8. Training and Implementation

To access the intervention supported by a trained facilitator please contact the local MHST, Under 18 Wellbeing Team or Suffolk County Council Psychology and Therapeutic Service, who also have several trained facilitators. Schools can support implementation by identifying suitable families and reinforcing strategies in the classroom.

9. Evidence and Outcomes

The programme is based on research by Professor Cathy Creswell and colleagues at the University of Oxford. It has been shown to be as effective as therapist-led CBT for mild to moderate anxiety and is recommended by NHS services.



10. Feedback

Feedback from parents and schools indicates reduced anxiety demonstrated through improved child confidence, school attendance, independence, and strengthened parent-child relationships. Detailed case study evaluations are available from the Psychology and Therapeutic Service.

11. Further Information and Resources

Resources include the book 'Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries', facilitator training materials, parent handouts, and digital modules. Support is available through local CAMHS (MHST) and educational psychology services.