

Cool Kids & Chilled Autism

Anxiety Management Skills for Autistic Children and Teens (aged 7-17 years)

The Emotional Health Clinic in the Macquarie University Lifespan Health and Wellbeing Research Centre offers evidence-based assessment and psychological treatment for emotional disorders across the lifespan. This clinic offers access to our flagship treatment programs that have been developed using scientific research, evaluated in clinical trials, and are used nationally and internationally.

ABOUT THE COOL KIDS & CHILLED AUTISM PROGRAMS

The Cool Kids Program is a world renowned cognitive behavioural therapy program developed at Macquarie University to teach children and parents skills that address anxiety disorders. The original program has been adapted to suit the learning style and needs that arise for children who are also on the Autism Spectrum.

Our programs are offered in both individual and group formats. Both versions focus on teaching skills to manage anxiety in everyday situations, including:

- Recognising anxiety
- Skills to manage the physical symptoms of anxiety
- Parenting strategies that encourage brave behaviour
- Identifying and using helpful (realistic) thoughts, and most importantly,
- Facing fears, building independence, and increasing confidence through stepladders (gradual exposure).



During each session, families receive information on the topic being covered and are offered the chance to engage in discussion, games and role play to learn new skills and then to use their skills in real life situations. Practice tasks are a crucial part of the program and are given following every session.

Please note: Our Autism Adapted Programs are not social skills programs and do not focus on general emotion regulation or behavioural challenges.

WHO CAN DO COOL KIDS/CHILLED AUTISM PROGRAM?

The Cool Kids & Chilled Autism programs are designed for children and teens who have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and who are experiencing anxiety that is impacting their everyday activities. The group program is designed for you people who are enrolled in a mainstream classroom setting (with or without support) and who are comfortable with small group work.

The program is not recommended for children who are suicidal, who are self-harming or who have been school refusing for two weeks or more as they are more likely to benefit from more intensive supports.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

ASSESSMENT

The assessment is designed to ensure that the program is likely to be helpful and to tailor the program to each young person. The assessment is split into two stages: online questionnaires followed by an in-person interview. By splitting the assessment into 2 stages, we are able to ensure that the Cool Kids or Chilled Autism Program is likely to be appropriate prior to a young person having to attend the clinic.

After the assessment, our recommendation will be discussed with families. The recommendation for group or individual Cool Kids Autism sessions will be based on a number of factors including school grade, family preferences, suitability of a child for the group setting, current wait list and group dynamic. Alternatively, individually tailored treatment or other programs may be recommended if more appropriate.

TREATMENT PROGRAM

Individual Sessions

The Cool Kids and Chilled Autism programs typically take 10 sessions to complete, however there is flexibility depending on progress. Each session takes 50 minutes, and is attended by both the young person and their parent/carer. Sessions can occur at our clinic in North Ryde or via Telehealth.

Individual sessions are facilitated by a psychologist or clinical psychologist who has had specialised training in the autism spectrum adaptation of the Cool Kids Program. Limited places with a provisional psychologist (final year post-graduate intern) at a lower cost are also available.

Group Program

Cool Kids and Chilled Autism groups both involve 10 sessions that are held over 12-15 weeks. All groups start at 4.30pm on the same day each week and run for 2 hours. Sessions are attended by 4-6 families, with parents/caregivers and children/teens involved in every session. Sessions are facilitated by a psychologist or clinical psychologist and provisional psychologists will attend as co-therapists.

COSTS AND REBATES

The assessment fee is \$142.50 for the online assessment and \$285 for the in-person assessment. Individual session fees depend on the type of psychologist that is seen, with a range of \$95-285 per session. In addition, at the first session there is a \$35 charge for the program workbooks. The group program is \$2,650 paid up front and covering all 10 sessions, program workbooks and materials. Fees are reviewed annually.

MEDICARE REBATES, NDIS AND PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Medicare rebates are available if you are seeing a registered or clinical psychologist, or participate in a group. To be eligible for a rebate you need your GP to activate a Mental Health Treatment Plan and provide a referral letter. You can access up to 10 individual and 10 group sessions with a Medicare rebate in each calendar year.

Alternatively, individual or group sessions may be funded via the NDIS if identified in your child's NDIS plan or you may be able to claim a rebate for psychology services using your private health fund. Contact your health fund about whether you are eligible to claim on psychology services.

CONTACT US

If you would like to discuss Cool Kids and Chilled Autism Programs or have any questions, please contact our friendly team on 02 9850 8711.

If you would like to register for the program scan the QR code to provide your details.



FIND OUT MORE

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