

Cool Kids Program

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT ANXIETY ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT

Please read through the following information carefully, which will help you determine whether assessment and treatment at the Centre for Emotional Health Clinic is suitable for your child and family.

ABOUT THE CEH CLINIC

The Centre for Emotional Health Clinic (CEHC) is a research and training clinic aimed at furthering our understanding of child & adult emotional disorders and improving our methods of treatment. The Clinic is part of the Centre for Emotional Health, Macquarie University. Families who seek help at the CEHC will receive state of the art assessment and treatment based on internationally recognised research, much of which has been conducted by our team over the past 20 years.

There is an expectation that by seeking services from a research and training clinic that families will participate in various research activities related to developing better assessment and treatment methods, and, better understanding the causes of anxiety and related disorders.

Assessment and treatment services at the CEHC are provided by psychologists. We also function as a training clinic for students who are completing post-graduate clinical psychology degrees. Our team include:

- a) Provisional Psychologists who have completed an undergraduate degree and 1 year of further postgraduate training and supervised practice in clinical psychology. They work under the supervision of a senior clinical psychologist.
- b) Registered Psychologists who have a postgraduate degree in clinical psychology and who are completing further supervised practice to achieve endorsement in the specialisation of clinical psychology.
- c) Clinical Psychologists who have been endorsed in clinical psychology following a minimum of 4 years of postgraduate training and supervised practice.
- d) Senior Clinical Psychologists who have extensive experience in the assessment and treatment of anxiety and other emotional health difficulties. They provide expert supervision and leadership in clinical psychology.

All staff at the CEHC who provide the Cool Kids program complete specialised training in child and adolescent anxiety and receive supervision from senior clinical psychologists who have expertise in this area.

ABOUT THE COOL KIDS PROGRAM

Cool Kids is a 10 session program aimed at treating anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. It uses a cognitive behavioural approach which means that it focuses on teaching skills to manage anxiety. Core skills include how to identify anxious thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, discovering realistic thoughts and expectations and gradually building independence and confidence by facing fears. If needed, coping skills such as problem solving, assertiveness and relaxation are also introduced to manage difficult situations. In addition to teaching parents to support their child in the use of these new skills, a section of the program focuses specifically on parenting strategies that can encourage children to manage anxiety. 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 new skills in real life situations. Practice tasks are a crucial part of the program and are given following every session. Practice tasks encourage use of new skills in everyday situations.



Photo Credit: Chris Stacey

WHO IS COOL KIDS DESIGNED FOR?

The Cool Kids Program is designed for children:

- Who are at least 7 years old and in grades 1 through 12.
- Where anxiety is currently the main problem and it is significantly affecting his or her day-to-day life, and
- Who are not accessing other treatment for anxiety (except medication). Children who are on medication should be on a stable dosage for 2 months before starting Cool Kids.

The Cool Kids program will not be suitable for your child if he or she is currently experiencing:

- Significant learning delays that prevent mainstream class placement.
- Autism or a related disorder (a separate Cool Kids program is available for children who have an Autism Spectrum or Related Disorder).

In addition, children or adolescents who are considered at-risk due to abuse or neglect, who are currently suicidal and/or are self harming or who have been school refusing for a significant length of time, will not be recommended for the Cool Kids program as the only intervention due to the complexity of these situations.

These exclusions are in place to ensure that our treatment programs are delivered to children who are most likely to benefit from the program and for whom we are best equipped to offer services. Each child will be carefully assessed to determine whether our treatments are appropriate or whether other programs or services may better meet their needs.

WHAT DOES THE ASSESSMENT INVOLVE?

To determine the suitability of our programs we will ask you to complete a clinical assessment regarding your child. The clinical assessment is conducted by one of our provisional or registered psychologists and includes interviews separately for a child and his/her parent(s) and questionnaires about your child's thoughts, feelings and behaviours and related to parent's experiences. After the assessment, the assessing clinician will discuss your child with a supervisor and a recommendation for treatment or referral will be communicated to you. Assessments are valid for 6 months, after which time a reassessment would be needed to ensure that we have current information on your child.

During the assessment you and your child will be asked to participate in research activities that are aimed at increasing our understanding of child anxiety and related disorders. You and your child may participate in a variety of activities including collection of cheek swabs to help us understand the genetic components of anxiety, completion of additional questionnaires, and/or activities such as solving puzzles, interacting with peers or completing computer based challenges. You will be asked to give consent to each individual research task and as such can refuse to participate in a particular task without impacting on your ability to participate in other projects, or assessment and treatment.

WHAT TREATMENT WILL WE BE OFFERED?

The CEHC is a world leader in research into treatment of child anxiety. Research is conducted on ways to enhance Cool Kids treatment outcomes (for example by adding medications or additional cognitive-behavioural skills), ways to improve access to treatment (for example by providing treatment online) or investigating what types of treatment best suit specific types of anxiety. For example, we currently are examining whether additional cognitive behavioural skills that target social anxiety enhance outcomes.

Participating in treatment research means: 1) you must be willing to be randomized to a treatment approach (that is when 2 or more treatment approaches are offered, the particular treatment approach you receive is selected at random, like pulling names out of a hat); 2) you must be willing to participate in assessment at the conclusion of treatment and then at typically 1-2 follow up points (usually 6 months after finishing treatment); and 3) the treatment provided must be the only treatment that you are accessing for your child's anxiety.

If, after assessment, our treatment research program is determined to be suitable for your child, you will receive an invitation to participate. This invitation will provide exact details of the different treatment approaches being investigated and treatment consent. If it is determined that Cool Kids or the current research program would not best serve your child's needs, you will be offered either alternative treatment through the CEHC or appropriate referrals to other professionals. If, after assessment, you choose not to participate in the offered treatment research you may request appropriate referrals (which may include accessing our private treatment services).

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

An initial clinical assessment would typically cost \$390. However, in return for your participation in our research and training activities we offer a discounted cost of \$180.

Costs for treatment vary depending on whether you are participating in a research program as these fees are subsidised. Exact costs will be provided to you after assessment however as a general indication the upfront cost of participating in a Cool Kids research program is \$550 (covering approximately 10 sessions). Alternatively, accessing private treatment costs \$50-225 per session depending on the qualifications of the clinician.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

If you would like to have your child assessed regarding his/her anxiety please complete the online intake available at [Cool Kids Intake](#). Once we receive the completed form we will contact you to book a time for the assessment. We may also contact you to clarify if the program is likely to be suitable for your child.

Please feel free to contact the Clinic on (02) 9850-8711 if you have any questions regarding the research program or other services at the Centre for Emotional Health Clinic.



FIND OUT MORE
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