

What is school refusal?

A certain degree of anxiety and fear about school is normal for young people. However, some children and adolescents experience excessive anxiety which can result in refusal to attend school (hence the term 'school refusal').

These young people often complain of headache, stomachache or other physical illness. School refusal occurs in about 1% to 2% of school-aged children and adolescents.

Seriousness of school refusal

School refusal causes much distress to the young person and also interferes with the young person's social and educational development. The more time the young person is away from school, the more difficult it is to resume normal school life. As it is a difficult problem to manage, school refusal creates stress for parents and school teachers.

School Refusal Program

The goal of the program is to help young people aged between 11 - 15½ years resume school attendance as soon as possible. The program consists of a number of phases;



1. Assessment: Young people are screened regarding their suitability for the program. Information is collected from the family and school in order to specify the problems and clarify the situation.



2. Treatment: Parents and teachers are advised on practical behaviour management strategies. Various procedures are used to help the young person cope with his or her anxieties about school. In addition to this, some young people will be administered anti-anxiety/depressant medication.



3. Follow-up: Young people are assessed at various follow-up periods after treatment. This involves interviews/assessment of school attendance and general well-being.

Directors

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Program Staff

Clinicians working on the program are registered psychologists & probationary psychologists.

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Liaison with school

In addition to working with young people and parents, liaison with the school is an essential part of the program.

Referrals

Young people may be referred to the clinic by schools or other agencies. Also, families can seek assistance from the clinic without a formal referral.

Contacting the program

To discuss the program, families or school personnel should contact the School Refusal Program by telephoning (03) 9594 1300 or email on schoolrefusal.spppm@med.monash.edu.au

Address: Centre for Developmental Psychiatry & Psychology, Monash Medical Centre, 246 Clayton Road, Clayton 3168

Website: www.med.monash.edu.au/spppm/research/devpsych/srp.html

School

Refusal

Program



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