



ARC East of England Working in partnership to help children with worries

Improving access to Parent-Led Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for anxious children through training school pastoral staff

Anxiety problems are the most prevalent mental health difficulties in childhood. Evidence-based treatments exist, but children and families are frequently unable to access them due to these services having long waiting lists. The number of pastoral and support worker positions in schools is on the rise, and within this role, there is an opportunity to support a child's wellbeing. Yet, in order to make use of

these roles, they require the appropriate tools and interventions to effectively meet this need.

What is the aim of the project?

The Working on Worries (WoW) project is a cross-sector collaboration between health services, academia and the educational sectors in Norfolk and Waveney. This project aims to increase access to Parent-

Led Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (PL-CBT) by training primary school pastoral and support staff in this method to support children with anxiety.

What are we doing?

This project has trained practitioners from the local mental health system to train primary school pastoral and support staff in PL-CBT. After receiving training, PL-CBT trainers lead Collaborative Learning and Support Sessions (CLaSS) to provide ongoing support to the school staff. To ensure the training is effective, we are collecting relevant information, such as the experiences of school staff involved.

How are we involving people?

A system-wide steering group with representatives from mental health service providers, commissioners, local authority children's services, education systems, parents, and carers has guided this project. In addition, we established a Parent and Carer Advisory Group.

What is the impact so far?

So far, we have trained 33 PL-CBT trainers

within the local mental health system, who in turn have trained 216 school staff from 125 primary schools in Norfolk and Waveney. The PL-CBT intervention has been implemented with 189 families, demonstrating that with support from the health sector, school-based pastoral and support workers can effectively intervene in cases of childhood anxiety, reducing its impact on children's lives.

What next?

We have received funding from the local Integrated Care Board to continue training and expand the offer to schools with access to Mental Health Support Teams. In addition, we will develop an implementation guide and toolkit.

For more information about this project

Scan the QR code or contact the Principal investigator, Dr Tim Clarke (timothy.clarke9@nhs.net).



What is NIHR ARC East of England?

The National Institute for Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration (NIHR ARC) East of England is one of the 15 NIHR ARCs. We collaborate with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and the Universities of Cambridge, East Anglia, Hertfordshire and Essex, along with other NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, Integrated Care Systems, patient-led organisations, charities, and industry partners.

Get in contact with NIHR ARC East of England

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