



ISAAC

Intervention for School Anxiety and Avoidance in Children

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A feasibility study of ISAAC - a brief parent-focused intervention to reduce Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Pending ethics

Introduction

There is ongoing concern about the rise of EBSA for children in primary school since the pandemic (1). To mitigate this, it will be important to **intervene early** (2).

Previous research has informed the development of this new intervention for primary school children experiencing EBSA, including:

- **Formative research** (interviews and surveys) to explore the nature of school attendance problems and stakeholders' experiences and priorities for support [3]
- **Co-design workshops and consultations** to inform initial intervention modelling.

This collaboration has developed the intervention explained in this poster.

The current research will be **field testing** and **refining** an initial pilot version through **evaluating** the **feasibility** and **acceptability** of the intervention for parents.

Objectives

Primary objective

To assess **feasibility** and **acceptability** of self-guided intervention with coaching for families where children are experiencing or at risk of EBSA

Secondary objective

The extent to which there are **indicators** that this intervention achieves the **outcomes** we want it to achieve:

- Lowering child anxiety about school
- Increasing school attendance
- Lowering parent stress



Methods

Study Design

Mixed method case series design that assesses **quantitative process indicators** of feasibility and will deploy **qualitative semi-structured interviews** to explore parents' experiences of intervention delivery.



Participants

Approx. 15 parents recruited in partnership with local inclusion services and schools

- **Parent/carers of a primary school child** enrolled in a mainstream primary school who is **experiencing emotional distress and avoidance associated with school attendance**
- The parent/carer will need to have access to an internet-enabled device
- The parent/carer will need to be able to read and speak English, as required to engage with the verbal content of the intervention.

The intervention

Three modules addressing

- Parental management of child anxiety
- Effective home-school communication
- Support for parents with their own wellbeing in stressful situations.

Online modules: videos and reflective tasks for parents to complete at their own pace before the coaching session

Coaching sessions: discuss the learning tasks set, problem-solve any barriers and signpost to any further materials.

Outcomes

1



Feasibility

(quantitative process indicators)(10)

- Uptake
- Retention
- Dosings
- Coaching fidelity
- Barriers:

2



Acceptability

(brief survey and further depth in follow-up interviews)(9)

- Affective attitude
- Burden
- Ethicality
- Intervention Coherence
- Opportunity cost
- Perceived effectiveness
- Self-efficacy

3



Clinical outcomes

(baseline and post assessment survey)

- Lowering children's anxiety around attending school
- SCAS-P (4); The School Refusal Assessment Scale (5)
- Parent-School Collaboration
- Parent engagement in early childhood education (6)
- Lowering parent stress
- The Perceived stress scale, (7)
- Lowering parent accommodation
- Family accommodation Scale- Anxiety, (8)

- This study will indicate the feasibility and acceptability of a new brief intervention for families where primary school- aged children are experiencing EBSA.
- This study aims for parents to enrol and begin the intervention in May.
- For further information, please contact: bm333@sussex.ac.uk
- See QR code for references

