

Professor Samantha Cartwright-Hatton

University of Sussex



Wednesday, 27th April 2022

University of Reading

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Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment

The Raising Confident Children Course: Helping Anxious Parents to Raise Confident Children.

Introduction:

Anxiety runs in families. Part of this transmission is genetically mediated, but much is via environmental pathways. Despite the elevated risk of anxiety disorders in children of anxious parents, we currently do very little to intervene in this process. This workshop will outline a new intervention aimed at anxious parents who want to learn techniques for raising confident children. In a randomized controlled trial of the intervention, children whose parents received the intervention were 16% less likely to have an anxiety disorder six months later, compared to children whose parents were in a control group. This workshop is primarily aimed at clinicians working with anxious adults but may also be useful to clinicians working with anxious children.

Content

The intervention takes the form of a one-day group-based workshop and will run through its full content, in its usual order and style, as if with a live group of parents. First, we set the framework of the intervention – giving parents a basic understanding of the cognitive model of anxiety in children and introduce the idea of ‘The Seven Confident Thoughts’. Next, we will look at strategies that are thought to be associated with confidence in children that can be deployed by a parent, regardless of their level of anxiety, namely: providing a clear, consistent and gentle approach to managing children’s behaviour; ‘emotion coaching’; diet, sleep, caffeine and play. Finally, we move on to identifying and ameliorating processes that are particularly relevant for anxious parents, namely: overprotection; modelling anxiety; spotting and compensating for anxiety ‘gaps’ in children’s experience; perfectionism.

Learning objectives:

- To recognise some of the parenting processes that can be impacted by parental anxiety.
- To understand the role of parenting processes in the development of childhood anxiety.



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- The develop some techniques for talking to anxious parents about their children and their parenting.
- To develop some techniques for helping anxious parents to raise confident children.

Training modalities

The workshop will be relaxed and informal. It will be highly interactive and include both experiential and didactic teaching. Delegates will experience the full intervention as clients do.

Key references:

Cartwright-Hatton, S., Ewing, D., Dash, S., Hughes, Z., Thompson, E. J., Hazell, C. M., ... (2018). Preventing family transmission of anxiety: Feasibility RCT of a brief intervention for parents. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 57(3), 351-366.

About the presenter:

Sam began her career with a D.Phil (PhD) in the Department of Psychiatry at Oxford, under the supervision of Adrian Wells. The subject of this thesis was a Metacognitive model of Generalised Anxiety Disorder in Adults. During subsequent clinical psychology training in Manchester, she developed an interest in the far less well-researched area of anxiety in childhood. On qualifying, she joined the Manchester clinical course as academic tutor, while working as a clinical psychologist in the Manchester Children's Hospital Trust. Shortly after qualification, she was awarded a 3-year NHS executive fellowship to develop her research in anxiety in childhood. This was followed by a 4-year MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship to trial a new intervention for families of young anxious children. She joined the University of Sussex in 2011 with an NIHR fellowship to develop and test a preventative intervention aimed at families with an anxious parent. She was awarded the British Psychological Society Award May Davidson Award in 2009 for her research into anxiety of childhood.

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All workshops, unless otherwise indicated are intended for a cross/mixed ability audience, and are delivered online

