

Parenting Course

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1. Parenting Course - What does the ADHD Parent Education program cover _

Kia ora, my name's Charlene. I'm a mother of four and you're out of best children. Kia ora, I'm Hania Wagenvoort. I'm a social worker at Christchurch Methodist Mission and I work with whānau who have a child who's been diagnosed with ADHD. Kia ora, I'm Jan Hasson. I'm a psychologist at Christchurch Methodist Mission with Hania and I also work with whānau who have just had their child diagnosed and I really enjoy working with families with kids with ADHD. So you work with families that have just received a diagnosis of ADHD. What sort of services do you provide for them? We run a programme, ADHD Parent Education Programme, which is available really to anybody who's got a diagnosis.

So once you get that diagnosis, and you get referred to us, that's when we kind of kick in. And so our programme helps you to understand a bit more about what does the diagnosis mean? What is the, a bit more about the medication for ADHD? And then how does ADHD impact on the brain in terms of the emotional regulation and executive functioning? And we also look at in-depth sessions on diet, on sleep, managing technology is another big one. For parents, they struggle with that quite a lot. And those sort of sensory issues that kids can have as well. Wonderful. Do you have anything to add? Yes, we have about seven to eight sessions.

Sometimes we add in toileting if parents want to talk about that as well. Sometimes there are some issues around bed wetting or that kind of thing that might have... an ADHD overlay to that that might be a little bit different for kids who have toileting issues in other ways. So, yeah.

2. Parenting Course - How is the program run and who can attend _

I've done a number of parenting courses over my time. How is yours different to the others? The difference really with our programme is that ADHD lends, and we're really looking at neurodivergent child and how we can support parents to manage and understand some of the difficulties that that child might be having either at home or at school. So can you tell me a wee bit about how the sessions are

run? Is it in person or online, or is there an option to do both? Yeah, sure. We actually run both. So we started with the face-to-face group, which we find that parents and caregivers can come together, meet others, talk about some of the issues, and share really important information.

And we run a summertime evening programme. It's always during term time, seven to eight sessions, and then we run a full-time session where we run a lunchtime programme for people who can come in at lunchtime. And then, when COVID hit in 2020, we kind of had a re-evaluate. How are we going to present this information with parents? So we started doing an online programme and we're currently running that programme throughout the year, always during the term time. It's seven to eight sessions again.

can't come in person really find the online process really useful and as far as who can come to the sessions is it available to the parents and the grandparents or the aunties the uncles is it or is it just mom and dad what's the process we we often have grandparents um and other people who may be caring for children um and sometimes a teacher might pop along as well it's really um up to the whānau particularly for the face-to-face groups it's it's nice to have a nice mix of people so we can bounce ideas around and um and parents learn a lot from each other there's lots of little tips and tricks that parents have about you know ways of managing school or food or anything um and and sometimes we get our best ideas don't we um yeah we definitely adapt and incorporate ideas from parents and caregivers and share it with with other parents

3. Parenting Course - What age range is the program targeted at and who refers to the program_

What sort of age group are you looking at as far as who's being referred to you? Is there a cut-off at 16? There's not a cut-off. Really, the programme is aimed five to six, up to 13. But we have had older kids, and lots of whānau do have kids that might have a six-year-old, and then a teen who have ADHD. It's just that the majority of the behavioural kind of strategies are aimed at that primary-intermediate group, but they can be adapted for older teens. The managing technology session that we do run is really useful to talk a wee bit about teens and how to manage that. And with the referral process, how is it different for the public and the private system?

Because a lot of people are finding the public system is taking too long, so they're going private. Do they need to self-refer? From that diagnosis, or is the private, do you know if the private sector will refer them on to these areas? Mostly we have a contract with Child Adolescent Services, so most of our referrals come through CAF. And I think still a lot of families will be going through CAF because of the medication. But we do take referrals. Referrals sometimes from the community. When we know that there's a diagnosis of ADHD, and we're really flexible and we can fit people into our courses, maybe the online course might suit them, or they're welcome to come to our group session.

So yeah, we do take other referrals. And as our name gets better known out there in the community, we're getting a lot more. Not-for-profit organisations kind of hearing about our service and referring to us, or sometimes referring the whānau just to get them to self-refer. And as long as we get a referral form, that's all we need. Then we can kind of process them and let them know. The only real criteria is that diagnosis for the child for ADHD. So is that something, say for instance, my daughter had been diagnosed privately, and could I refer? Can I refer to you? Sorry, refer myself to you with that diagnosis?

Yes, absolutely. We're really open to a variety of people coming from different streams.

4. Parenting Course - Is a diagnosis required to attend the program_

Can anybody come if they suspect their child has ADHD or is it something that you must have a diagnosis to be able to attend the course? Yes we definitely need the diagnosis because we find that if we have a diagnosis we have a group of people who are already at the same beginning stage of you know what is ADHD about, my child's suddenly been diagnosed, what does the medication mean, what do I need to look at and do, whereas if you don't have that and you just suspect it's not ADHD you're really unsure about a whole lot of different kind of things that are happening for your child. So it's really the main criteria. Yes there's quite a lot of material to get through and it really is specifically around ADHD. There could be many other reasons why children, their behaviour may look like it ADHD but um it really needs to be diagnosed yeah it must whether it's private or public we do need that um that ADHD diagnosis because um we find that when we started off we had parents coming who thought that their child had ADHD and they're really at the beginning stage and they haven't looked at medication they don't really know that much about it and um and the whole group already has a diagnosis and they're in that same space and it just it causes a bit of an issue with that group dynamic

5. Parenting Course - What specific topics are covered in the 8 week program_

If I was able to come to the in-person course but my husband wasn't, can he do the online and I do the in-person or does it have to be one or the other? Absolutely, mix and match basically. You come to the in-person, your partner husband can do the online. We really try to get both parents doing it, you know, wherever possible, whatever works for them. So what does the programme look like and who presents it? Well we're a collaboration, I said that before, we're a collaboration. So we have a range of people present, we have seven to eight sessions and so we generally start with the psychiatrist and he's a really great guy at talking to whānau and answering questions and he has a lot of experience in the area so we start with him first.

And then Hania and I do some sessions and we do, we look at positive behaviour and we look at kind of the why of the behaviour. We want to look behind the sort of surface of the behaviour and often as parents we get into reacting to the surface of the behaviour because that's what's presenting to us but we want to dig a little bit deeper and find out why our children with ADHD are so vulnerable. How are they behaving in that way? What could be the reason behind that? So we spend a bit of time doing that. We have some occupational therapists come to talk about sensory sensitivities which is often very helpful to parents because we don't often think of those things.

And that fits in really beautifully because we do a whole session on emotional regulation and the two are really nicely tied together. Yes they do and emotional regulation is such a big part of ADHD isn't it? Yeah. And executive functioning too. There's a lot of things that we might not necessarily tie in with ADHD. And then we have a dietitian who comes. That's great because a lot of the stimulant medication can cause issues with appetite. So she's really good at helping parents to work with their kids to help them still gain weight as well. And then we also have a dietitian who comes to take the medication.

So that's that's very helpful. And as Hani said before we've got that technology one. And sleep because they go hand in hand. Yes sleep. So yeah we cover a range of things. Yeah and how long does the course go for? Usually it's for about eight weeks. So usually the face-to-face is usually on a Wednesday evening or lunch time. And then the online one is during the the school term but you can see it any time. You know your available time basically we just send out the links every week and we attach the powerpoint and we also attach resources as well. So yeah and that's available for a couple months after the whole program's finished.

So you can still look at it. And is there any cost for this course? Well that's a better of it. It's entirely free. Wow. That's fantastic. Yeah yeah and you don't have to come to the whole course? No it's available.

have to come to the whole course either or watch all of the online videos you just you know you might have a particular issue with say sleep or you might need to listen to the dietitians advice or you may really want to know a bit more about the medication you you don't have to see all of the videos or or come to all of the sessions although some parents really do like to do that because it kind of builds on itself a little bit so in the face-to-face group you get that kind of group energy going where people get to know each other weave it and feel comfortable about sharing and it's not only about the difficult times it's actually about the strategies that have worked or what they've found and we find that really useful and can you do the course more than once absolutely you're welcome to do it more than once I think we have had some people do it more than once yeah we've had people start doing the online and then they say oh I really want to come and meet other people and talk with them so they come and do the face-to-face as well and we update things too like we are learning all the time so we are updating our material too and our speakers are as well

6. Parenting Course - Parenting a child with ADHD - How the program helps families

When dealing with a child with ADHD there's always lots of ideas that other parents or other people like to give you. You know, maybe get them to bed earlier, have a look at their diet, get them off the tablets. You know, I would never let my kid do that. And so when you go through the process of the diagnosis and as a parent you think, okay, I'm not doing anything wrong. This is actually something wrong. And then you get courses offered to you and you think, oh, I am doing something wrong. I obviously don't know what I'm doing. What would you have to say to parents about that? Yeah, we see parents getting a lot of judgment out in the community about their child's behaviour.

And what we do know is that ADHD is a neurological condition and it affects the way the brain functions and therefore affects behaviour as well, executive function and part of the brain. And I guess what we are offering Mm-hmm. to parents is not telling them how to do things better or they're doing things wrong. We're explaining the effects on the ADHD brain, basically, on how your child sees the world and responds and giving you some understanding around that. And really our role is supportive and it is voluntary. And we find that actually most parents want more information. They want to know more about it.

You know, how does it work? Mm-hmm. How does the medication work? And that first session that Jan was talking about with our psychiatrist, Mac Eagleston, he talks about ADHD has not been brought about because of bad parenting. Yeah. You know, it is there.

Yeah. And we kind of just reinforce that as well, don't we? That message. Yeah, we want to help parents to understand that typical parenting should be done in the right way. Yeah. Because it's not about the physical. It's about the emotional. Yeah.

often really does not work and really things have to be tweaked quite a lot because the ADHD brain just works differently and often like for instance reward charts just don't work the same for children with ADHD so we explore those kinds of things how the brain is working and how we can best help our children and we have a few interesting little tips and tricks around that like one of our things we talk about is spoon theory I don't know if you've heard about spoon theory yeah yeah I mean it's great if you have ADHD you know it just takes you that much more effort to do the things that what you see other people just look so normal and easy you know yeah it's that sensory overload that cognitive overload you know you wake up in the morning you have less spoons of energy and the brain because the communication and the different parts of the brain doesn't work as well you have to use a lot more energy to be able to concentrate and do stuff and then you deplete your energies and then we see kids at school who have emotional meltdowns because they can't manage anymore they've used up all their spoons of energy yeah so you know those those are the sorts of things that we talk about and look at and share with parents yeah so we we're helping parents to understand that their parenting can be so helpful for their children and and that they can really deliberately work to help their children through those kinds of difficulties like spoon you know using up all your spoons or just not being able to get yourself organized to get out the door in the morning and understanding that it's not because you're lazy it's actually because your executive functioning is around about two years behind other children so understanding those things and how how we can support our kids um to to get out the door happy and ready for school yeah so I'm familiar with the spoon theory um but could you explain um what what's the difference between the spoon theory and the spoon theory and what that is for for those watching the time you know what that is well we all have and you know it's a little bit like the filling your cup as well you know we all have um some energy in the morning when we get out of bed and we might have more or less depending on the day um you know it might be Wednesday and it's been a busy week so far and we might have been up in the night with a child or we might be have a cold so we might have less spoons ready to um to use during the day the energy that we have so we might have other issues like we may have executive functioning difficulties and find it just that much harder to get out the door in the morning um we might have other um things going on we might have had a migraine we might have had an argument with our partner we might have had a bus stop with our best friend you know all of those things so it applies to all of us that uses up the spoons and i think if we're looking at kids um you know they can't find their shoes in the morning so um they're all upset they want to take their particular shoes that they like to school and that's used up some spoons um and then you know um they're in the car and and some siblings have an argument and that's that sensory overload um and then they end up being late so already they're down quite a few spoons the spoons of energy being used to cope with those those um things that have occurred and those adverse conditions that have occurred and um and then it just depletes and you know as i was saying you know some kids in the afternoon have just there's nothing it's gone yeah plus they might not have because they've on the stimulant medication so their appetite is low they might not have refueled during the day because they just haven't felt hungry so that can also yeah yeah often hits when you know your child jumps in the car and they have just had enough in fact um i i was just uh remembering about um a mom who talked to me and said that um she'll take a child to the mall and they were fine they were fine in the mall fine fine fine until they got into the car and the the child just that was it spoons were gone used up all the spoons to manage with the chaos the lights the excitement everything and there's that emotional meltdown in the car just like hot work because that's all that child could manage in that space so um yeah so that way we're kind of looking at the why of the behavior you know what's what's sitting the child just didn't have a meltdown because they wanted to have a meltdown there was some reasons for that so we start to understand why behavior happens yeah yeah yeah and it's got nothing to do with being a bad parent no that's what's happening with your child yeah

7. Parenting Course - Key messages

I guess the key message I'm taking away from today is that they're not naughty kids, that they have a neurodivergent brain and things just look different and they react different. So we need to learn how to teach them how to navigate this crazy world. Yeah, that's right. And I think we also, we tend to think of all the difficulties and that kind of thing too. And what we also like to talk about is, you know, all the positives for our kids. All the strengths. Yeah, all the strengths. And neurodiversity is an amazing thing. You know, we have people with strengths. That's what we want to talk about as well. Yeah. So, you know, please come to our course. It's free. It's there for all parents who have a child who've been diagnosed with ADHD. We're really into that neuroaffirming kind of power and language and understanding. That we want to share with people.