

# An Evaluation of a Virtual Workshop for Young People with Anxiety and Physical Symptoms

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## Background and Aim

The Paediatric Gastroenterology and Chronic Pain services at the Evelina London Children's Hospital set up a **virtual anxiety management workshop for young people (YP) aged 11-17, with Physical Symptoms**, and their parents.

Research has highlighted:

- **The role of the gut-brain connection on both anxiety and gastroenterological symptoms** (Ancona et al., 2021; Mertz, 2011; Wilhelmsen, 2000)
- **A high prevalence of the anxiety within the gastroenterology patient population** (Barberio et al., 2021; Cunningham et al., 2013)

The above taken alongside the identified **clinical needs and presentations of patients referred to our service**, provided a **strong rationale** for conducting the workshop.

**Based on Cognitive-Behavioural therapy (CBT)**, this workshop provided **psychoeducation and strategies to manage general and health specific anxieties**. Three online workshops took place between October 2020 and September 2021.



**Aim: To evaluate participants' outcomes of and feedback from the Managing Anxiety and Physical Symptoms workshops.**

## Methods

**Who attended:** 22 participants; 12 were young people who were open to the Gastroenterology Service, and their parents

**Content of workshop:** 3.5 hours on BlueJeans platform; PowerPoint presentation, interactive exercises and workbook. **Topics covered:** What is anxiety?, Pain, symptoms and anxiety and the role of avoidance, and self management strategies

**Questionnaires completed:** Pre and post questionnaires and **feedback form** comprising of **5-point Likert Scales** (0= no confidence/knowledge, 5= extremely confident/knowledgeable) and **free text responses**.



**Analysis:** Quantitative data was analysed using **descriptive statistics (Mean; M, and Standard Deviation; SD)**. **Free text** qualitative data was **collated and reviewed**.

Scan to view YP post workshop questionnaire

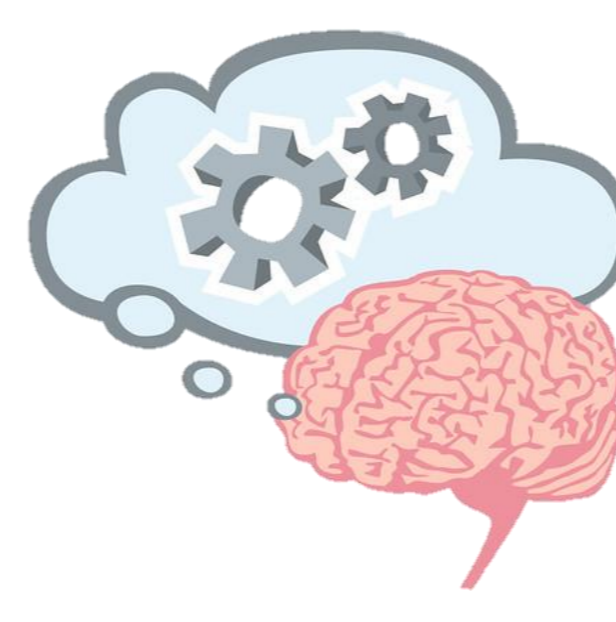
## Results

Young people and parents who attended the workshop indicated self-reported improvements in....



**Understanding of their/their child's anxiety**

(YP: M= 2.33 to 3.90)  
(Parent: M=3.00 to 4.25)



**Knowledge of strategies to manage their/their child's anxiety**

(YP: M= 2.50 to 3.90)  
(Parent: M=2.67 to 4.06)



**Confidence in using strategies to manage their/their child's anxiety**

(YP: M= 2.33 to 3.71)  
(Parent: M=2.61 to 4.00)

**94%**

**of participants found the workshop helpful and indicated that learning strategies to manage anxiety was one of the most helpful parts of the workshop**

## Summary and Conclusion

Participants **benefit from the workshops** in terms of their knowledge of and confidence in implementing different strategies to manage anxiety.

**Future work** would explore the **impact of the workshop on YP's presentation of physical symptoms, formal measures of pre and post levels of anxiety** and the **sustainability of YP's and parents' new knowledge/skills**.

**Conclusion:** The continuation of **psychologically led workshops** is supported, with adaptations to be implemented from participants' feedback.

## References

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