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**BRIEF COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY
FOR CHILDREN WITH
ANXIETY DISORDERS**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to determine the efficacy of a shortened version of an efficacious cognitive-behavioural programme for anxiety in children. Four children (aged 8-11 years) diagnosed with anxiety disorders, and one or both of their parents participated in the study. Pre-treatment and post-treatment measures including structured diagnostic interviews, parent report, teacher, and self-report were administered. In addition, weekly measures of the child's trait anxiety and coping ability were obtained from the child and the parents. The programme led to marked changes in the children's functioning. All four children showed improvement on child self-report, parent report and independent clinician's ratings following treatment. Specifically, internalising and externalising behaviours, as well as their ability to cope with specific anxious situations improved in the four participants. Additionally, in most cases, parents involved in the programme showed slight improvement in their own anxiety and depressive symptoms at post-treatment. Moreover, scores for some participants had reduced to within a non-deviant range indicating clinically significant change following intervention. Most importantly, these gains were accompanied by all four children no longer receiving an anxiety diagnosis at post-treatment. Findings are discussed in terms of methodological issues (i.e., comorbidity, critical components of treatment, and duration of treatment), implications for clinical practice, and relevance for future treatment outcome research. Limitations of the research are highlighted and recommendations for future research directions are outlined. Suggestions for future research include testing the effectiveness of the programme on a large and diverse sample of children, investigating the long-term effects of treatment, and bridging the research-practice gap. Additional research is also required to find out to what extent parental involvement in the programme enhances the impact of treatment. Overall, the findings provide preliminary support for the effectiveness of a brief cognitive-behavioural programme for treating anxiety disorders in children.

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