

The Art of Managing School and Social Anxiety

Understanding Strengths. Building Trust. Supporting Engagement.

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION AND REFERRAL GUIDE

A trauma-informed early intervention programme for children and young people aged 8-16

Supporting:

- Social Anxiety
- School Anxiety
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs

Delivered by HCPC Registered Art Therapists

Based at Penrith Best Start Family Hub.



Our Values

Compassion

Care

Creativity

Collaboration



A Relationship-Led, Creative Approach SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, CONFIDENCE AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Children and young people experiencing anxiety, EBSA and wider SEMH needs often benefit from a gradual, relationship-led approach. Our programme combines therapeutic artmaking, Art Therapy and strengths-based support to help young people explore emotions, develop coping strategies and participate more confidently in learning and everyday life.



Why Art Therapy?

No artistic ability or experience is required.

Art Therapy is not about producing artwork or developing artistic skills. Creative materials provide an accessible way to communicate, reflect and explore emotions within a safe therapeutic relationship.

Art Therapy can:

- Provide a safe way to express thoughts and feelings when words are difficult
- Reduce pressure to communicate verbally
- Support understanding of emotions, experiences and relationships
- Help young people develop practical coping strategies

OUR SUPPORT MAY HELP YOUNG PEOPLE WITH:



Social Anxiety

Persistent anxiety affecting social interaction, participation and confidence within peer, community or educational settings.



School Anxiety

Anxiety associated with educational environments, expectations or school-related experiences.



Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Anxiety-driven barriers to engagement with education, often resulting in avoidance, withdrawal or significant distress.



Emotional Regulation

Challenges recognising, expressing or managing emotions in ways that support wellbeing and participation.



Low Confidence and Self Esteem

Negative self-perceptions impacting emotional wellbeing, relationships and learning engagement.



Social Isolation

Reduced connection with peers, community activities or support networks.



Anxiety Related Barriers to Learning

Anxiety that affects concentration, participation, motivation or engagement with learning opportunities.



Wider SEMH Needs

Social, emotional and mental health needs that may impact wellbeing, relationships, participation or engagement with learning.

Partnership Working

We work alongside families, educational settings and professional partners to provide coordinated support that complements existing education, health and community services.



A Flexible Whole-Family Approach

Complementing Education, Health, SEND and Community Support Pathways

Our programme is tailored to the strengths, needs and circumstances of each child and family. Working collaboratively with parents, carers and professionals, we develop personalised support that complements existing education, health and community services.

Supporting Engagement Beyond Attendance

While attendance may improve for some children and young people, the programme focuses on reducing the impact of anxiety and supporting participation, confidence and engagement in learning opportunities that are appropriate to individual needs.



- ✓ Understand and manage anxiety
- ✓ Increase participation in learning and everyday activities
- ✓ Strengthen confidence and social connection
- ✓ Develop practical coping and self-management strategies
- ✓ Work towards achievable personal goals

Developmentally Appropriate Delivery

Activity content and delivery methods are adapted to developmental stage, interests and individual need, ensuring support remains accessible and relevant.

Ages 8–11 Years

Creative and play-based approaches supporting:

- Emotional literacy
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Recognising and expressing feelings
- Emotional regulation and coping strategies
- Positive relationships and social skills

Ages 12–16 Years

Therapeutic and reflective approaches supporting:

- Anxiety management and coping strategies
- Identity, confidence and self-esteem
- Emotional regulation
- Social participation and peer relationships
- Future aspirations and personal development

SUITABLE REFERRAL PATHWAYS

We can work flexibly with children and young people accessing a range of educational and support pathways, including:



Mainstream Education

Complementing pastoral, SEND and wellbeing support plans within mainstream schools.



Elective Home Education (EHE)

Supporting children and young people accessing Elective Home Education through flexible, community-based approaches.



Flexible Learning Arrangements

Supporting children and young people accessing reduced timetables or personalised learning arrangements



Alternative Provision

Complementing alternative and specialist educational pathways through therapeutic support.



Specialist SEMH Provision and Multi-Agency Support Plans

Working alongside coordinated education, health and social care plans to support children and young people with complex SEMH needs.

Progress looks different for every child. Our aim is to support meaningful, sustainable outcomes that reflect each young person's strengths, circumstances and aspirations.



How the Programme works

A PHASED, RELATIONSHIP-LED MODEL OF SUPPORT

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Our programme follows a phased, relationship-led model that enables support to be tailored to individual strengths, needs and readiness. Interventions are introduced gradually, helping children, young people and families engage in ways that feel safe, achievable and meaningful.

Flexible Delivery Options

- Family Hub-based sessions
- Home visits where appropriate
- Online support and consultation
- Community-based engagement

1 Initial Engagement & Relationship Building

Creating emotional safety and establishing trust.

- Home, community or Family Hub-based engagement where appropriate
- Building positive relationships with children, young people and families
- Exploring strengths, interests and aspirations
- Collaborative goal setting and identifying priorities for support

For many children experiencing anxiety and EBSA, relationship-building is the intervention.

2 Understanding Needs and Strengths

Developing a shared understanding of needs and strengths.

- Strengths-based assessment of emotional, social and learning needs
- Information gathering with families and relevant professionals
- Identifying achievable personal goals

Assessment informs a personalised plan that reflects the child or young person's circumstances, strengths and goals.

3 Mentoring & Therapeutic Preparation

Supporting confidence, engagement and readiness.

- Individual mentoring and support
- Developing self-awareness and coping strategies
- Identifying achievable personal goals
- Developing readiness for therapeutic or group-based intervention

A flexible approach helps ensure support is introduced at a pace that feels safe and manageable.

4 Creative Therapeutic Intervention

Supporting emotional regulation and emotional wellbeing.

- Individual Art Therapy (where clinically indicated)
- Therapeutic artmaking and creative interventions
- Opportunities for emotional expression and reflection
- Development of practical coping strategies

Creative approaches can provide an accessible way for children and young people to explore emotions when talking feels difficult.

5 Parent & Carer Support

Strengthening family understanding and capacity.

- Psychoeducation relating to anxiety, EBSA and SEMH
- Practical regulation and wellbeing strategies
- Support navigating education, SEND and wellbeing pathways
- Strengthening family relationships

Supporting parents and carers is central to achieving sustainable outcomes for children and young people.

6 Groupwork & Community Participation

Building confidence, connection and participation.

- Small therapeutic group programmes
- Opportunities for social and emotional shared experiences
- Activities that develop social connection, participation and peer support
- Encouraging participation in learning, social and community opportunities

The focus is on increasing confidence, social participation and meaningful engagement in everyday life.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Our programme is designed to support positive, achievable and sustainable progress.

Children and Young People

- Reduced anxiety
- Increased participation and engagement
- Development of coping strategies
- Progress towards personal goals

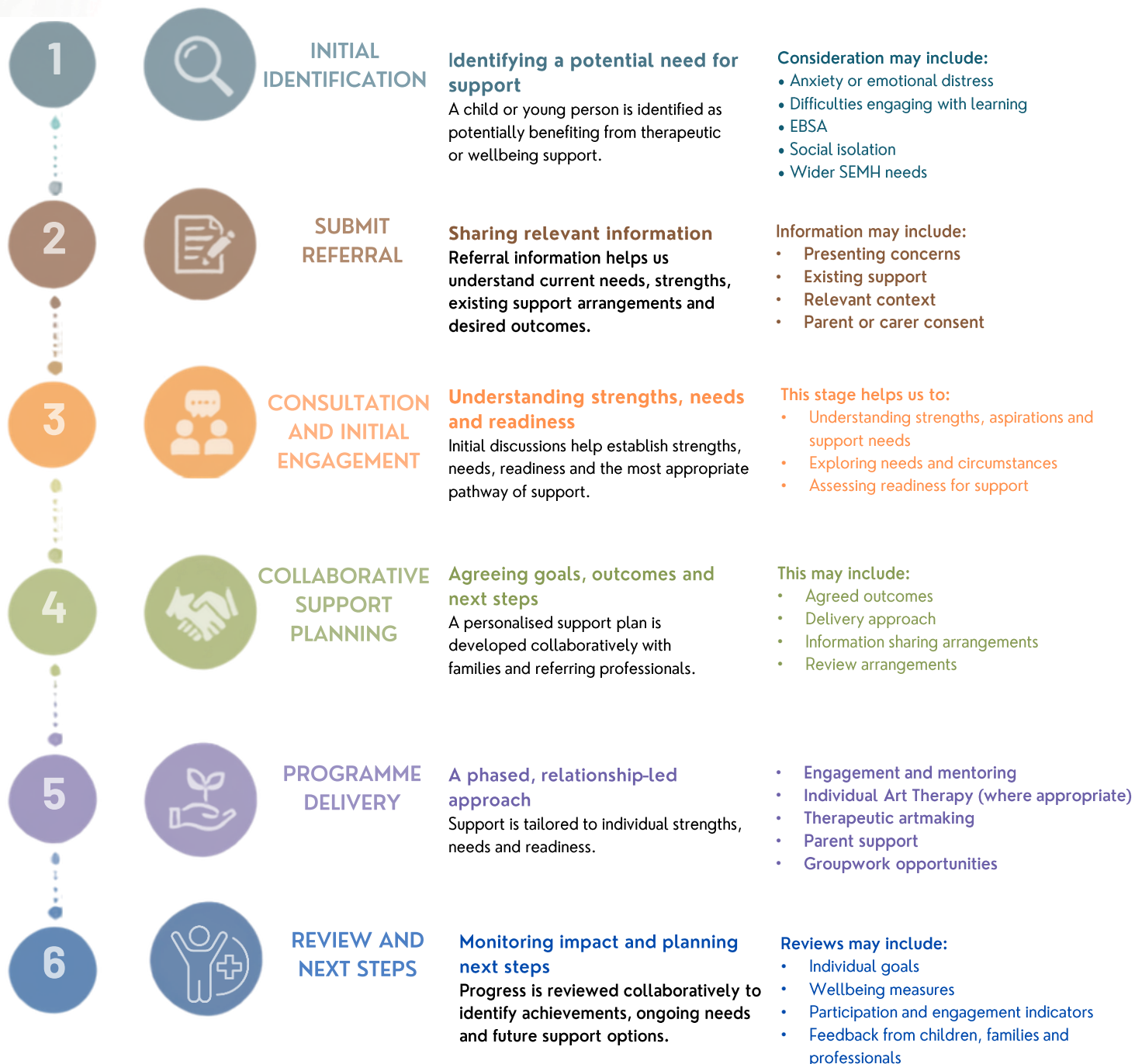
Parents and Carers

- Greater understanding of anxiety and EBSA
- Increased confidence supporting their child
- Improved awareness of support pathways



A STRUCTURED REFERRAL AND SUPPORT PATHWAY

Support is developed collaboratively with children, young people, families and professionals, ensuring interventions are strengths-based, proportionate and tailored to individual needs.



FLEXIBLE DELIVERY

Support may be delivered through:

- Family Hub sessions
- Home visits where appropriate
- Community-based engagement
- Online consultation and support

OUR PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

- Trauma-informed and relationship-led
- Strengths-based and person-centred
- Inclusive and accessible
- Collaborative partnership working
- Child and family voice at the centre
- Robust safeguarding and governance



REFERRALS WELCOME FROM EDUCATION, HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS.

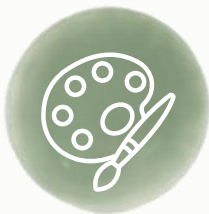


Compassion Care Creativity Collaboration

ABOUT ART MAKING DIFFERENCE CIC

Art Making Difference CIC is a community-based social enterprise delivering Art Therapy, therapeutic artmaking, creative wellbeing programmes and early intervention support for children, young people, families and communities across Eden and Westmorland and Furness.

Art Making Difference CIC works across schools, Family Hubs, community settings and outreach locations, delivering accessible support that complements existing education, health and family services.



Art Therapy

Delivered by HCPC Registered Art Therapists using evidence-informed, trauma-informed approaches.

OUR WORK



Wellbeing & SEMH Programmes

Supporting anxiety, emotional regulation, confidence, resilience and positive engagement.



Family & Parent Support

Psychoeducation, wellbeing groups, workshops and family-focused interventions.



Community Projects & Partnerships

Working alongside schools, Family Hubs, local authorities, voluntary organisations and community groups.

REFERRALS, PARTNERSHIPS & COMMISSIONING

We welcome enquiries from:



- Schools and educational settings
 - SEND and Inclusion Services
- Family Hubs and Early Help Teams
 - Children's Services
- Health and Wellbeing Services
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Funders and commissioning partners

Learn More About Our Work



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Creative Approaches. Therapeutic Support. Meaningful Outcomes.