Slide 1

School refusal:
From research to relevance
in clinics and schools

March 27th 2019
Dr David Heyne: heyne@fsw.leidenuniv.nl
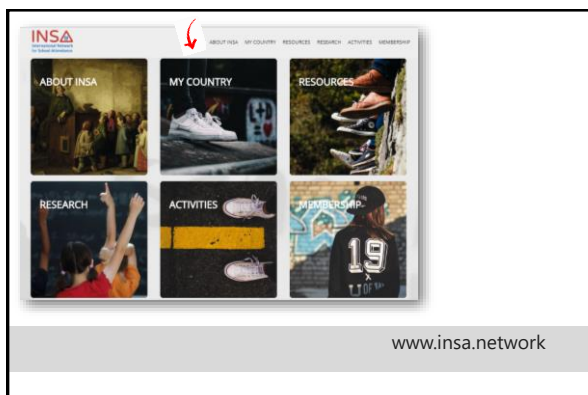Associate Professor, Leiden University Institute of Psychology

@school

1

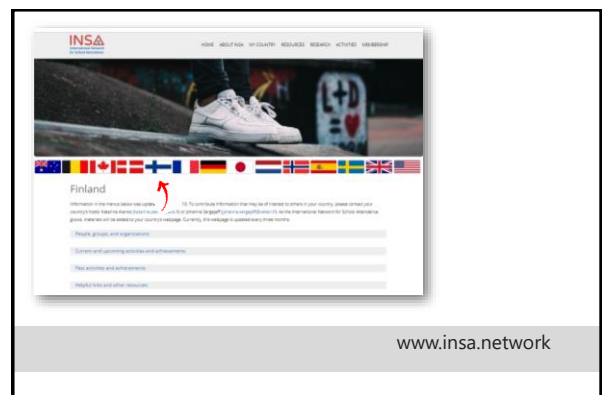Slide 2

INSA
International Network
for School Attendance

INSA promotes school attendance and responds to school attendance problems. We compile, generate, evaluate, and disseminate information, assessment, and intervention strategies.
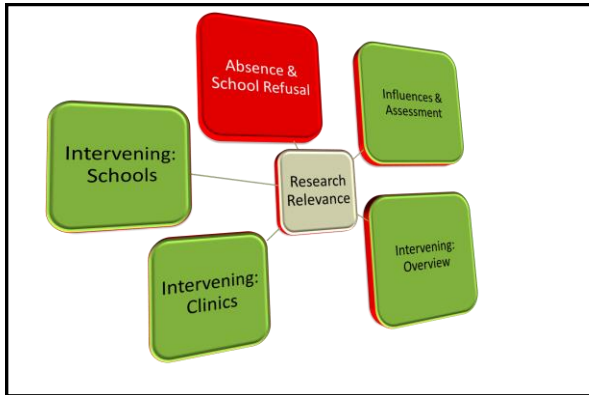
www.insa.network

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Slide 3

www.insa.network

3

Slide 4

Finland

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4

Slide 5

Research Relevance

- Absence & School Refusal
- Influences & Assessment
- Intervening: Overview
- Intervening: Clinics
- Intervening: Schools

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Slide 6

Absence of 0.5 yrs (across ages 7-11)
--> 0.7 year delay in reading scores
--> 1.0 year delay in maths scores
(Carroll, *School Psychology International*, 2010)

• 37% chronically absent at 4, also at 5
• 6% not chronically absent at 4, but at 5
(Ehrlich et al., *Early Childhood Res. Quarterly*, 2018)

Unauthorized absence increases risk for drop-out by 37%
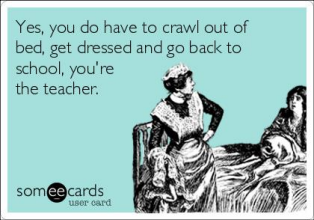(Cabus & De Witte, *Applied Economics Letters*, 2015)

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Slide 7

Absenteeism often places a strain upon school staff
(McAnanly, 1986)

Absenteeism affects teacher workload and morale
(Wilson et al., 2008)

Attendance problems are resource intensive and emotionally challenging
(Finning et al., 2018)

Yes, you do have to crawl out of bed, get dressed and go back to school, you're the teacher.

someecards
user card

e.g., monitoring attendance, deciding when to intervene, contacting parents, helping the young person keep up with schoolwork
(Balu & Ehrlich, 2018; Contessa & Paccione-Dyszlewski, 1981; Hersov, 1990;
Heyne & King, 2004; Kearney & Hugelshofer, 2000)

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Slide 8

"followed up with phone calls, letters,
parent meetings, family action plans and … as a last resort,
a recommendation for prosecution by the state."

(Hancock et al., 2018)

8

"20,000 individuals were taken to court in 2015 for failing to ensure a child went to school, an increase of 61% since 2011"

(Yusof & Bowcott, 2017, cited in Hancock et al., 2018)

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School Attendance Problems

- School Refusal
- Truancy
- School Withdrawal
- School Exclusion

10


Quite typical of school refusal

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School refusal occurs when:

1. Young person is reluctant or refuses to attend, together with temporal or chronic emotional distress (not required if no effort to get the young person to school)

2. Young person does not attempt to hide absence from parents (If they previously hid absence, this stopped when found out)

3. Young person does not display severe antisocial behaviour

4. Parents have made reasonable efforts to secure attendance, or express intention for their child to attend school
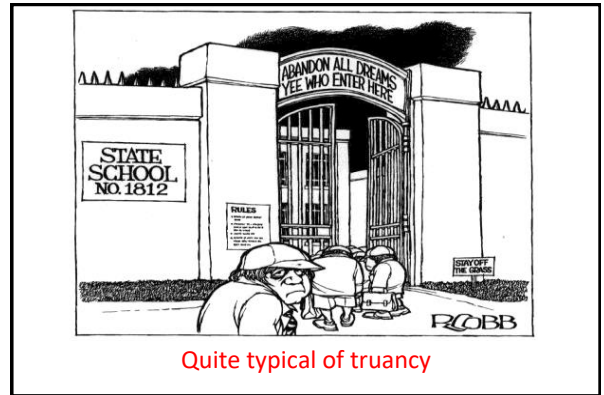
(Heyne at al., *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

@school

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Quite typical of truancy
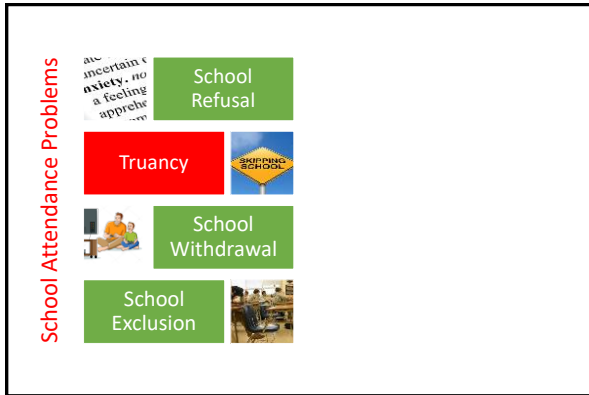
14

Truancy (narrow definition) occurs when:

1. Young person is absent from school or they are at school but absent from the proper location
   (no specification that young person is away from home)

2. This occurs without the permission of school authorities
   (no specification that school has not identified the absence)

3. Young person typically tries to conceal absence from parents

(Heyne at al., *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice,* 2019)

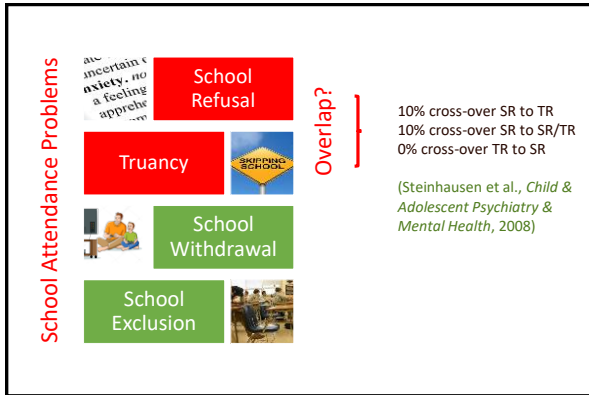@school

15

5% (Berg et al., 1993)
5% (Egger et al., 2003)
6% (Steinhausen et al., 2008)
9% (Bools et al., 1990)
17% (Berg et al., 1985)

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School Attendance Problems

- School Refusal
- Truancy
- School Withdrawal
- School Exclusion

Overlap?

10% cross-over SR to TR
10% cross-over SR to SR/TR
0% cross-over TR to SR

(Steinhausen et al., *Child & Adolescent Psychiatry & Mental Health*, 2008)

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School Attendance Problems

- School Refusal
- Truancy
- School Withdrawal
- School Exclusion

Overlap?

Maynard et al. (2015) review: SR intervention e.g., relaxation training, cognitive therapy

Maynard et al. (2013) review: TR intervention e.g., mentoring, attendance monitoring

(Heyne et al., *Cognitive & Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

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School Attendance Problems

- School Refusal
- Truancy
- School Withdrawal
- School Exclusion

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Quite typical of school withdrawal

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School Attendance Problems

School Refusal

Truancy

School Withdrawal

School Exclusion

Clinical experience points to overlap

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Slide 22

School Attendance Problems

School Refusal

Truancy

School Withdrawal

School Exclusion

"Peter's mother, who suffered from agoraphobia, ardently desired that her son return to school; at the same time, she described the period during which he stayed with her at home as one of the happiest periods in her life."

(Christogiorgos & Giannakopoulos, *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 2014)

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Slide 23

School Attendance Problems

School Refusal

Truancy

School Withdrawal

School Exclusion

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School exclusion (UK, September 2017)

Exclusion of youth with autism

'Worrying rise' in number of children with autism being expelled or suspended from school

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School exclusion (Netherlands, March 2016)

Excluded from sitting final exams

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School **N**on-**A**ttendance **C**hec**K**list

Over the PAST 4 WEEKS your child missed X whole days and X half days of school. Students miss school for all sorts of reasons. We would like to understand the reason(s) your son/daughter missed school. His/her absences are highlighted in the table shown here [hyperlink to table, or printed table, showing the last 4 weeks]. There is a list of reasons below the table. For each whole day or half day absent, choose the reason that best explains the absence. For example, if your child was absent on November 7 due to extreme weather conditions you would put a "14" as the reason for absence that day. If the reason your child missed school is not in the list, put "15" at the relevant place in the table and tell us the reason using the space provided. Your calendar or diary/planner may help you remember (e.g., trip to the doctor, religious holiday).
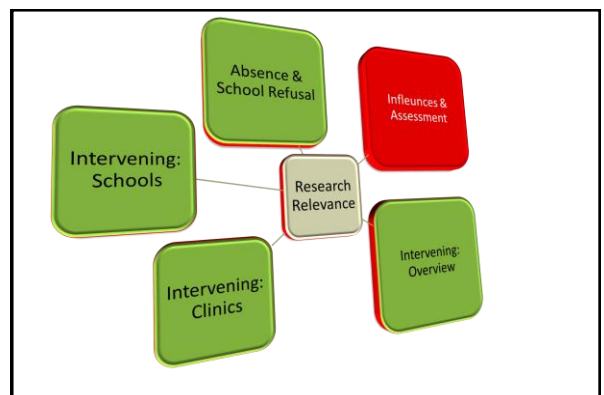
PLEASE INSERT REASON BELOW:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

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Youth

Family

School

Community

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Emerging school refusal:
A school-based framework for
identifying early signs and risk factors

(Ingul, Havik, & Heyne, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

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anxiety/depression
somatic complaints
poor emotion regulation

absence

low self-efficacy
negative thinking
limited problem-solving
developmental factors
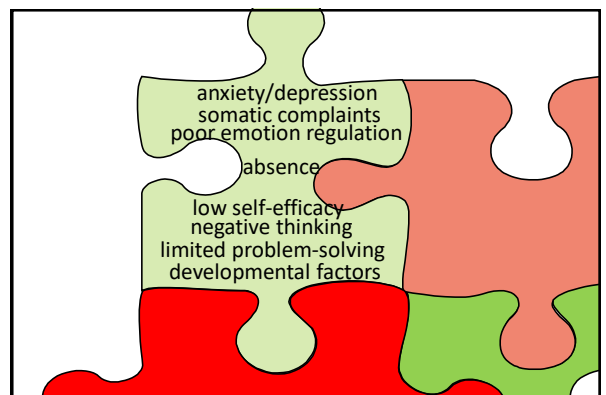
32

Going to school consists of 2 steps.
The 1st is to leave parents whom
children depend on or to leave home
where children feel comfortable.

Are there signs that the young person finds it hard to be away from their parents?

(Nishida et al., Acta Medica Okayama, 2004)

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Are there signs that the young person feels disconnected, left out, lonely?

The 2nd step is to attend groups in schools, which they must join.

Primary school children
are stumbling at the 1st step,
and secondary school youth
at the 2nd step.

(Nishida et al., Acta Medica Okayama, 2004)

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Anxious attenders have more friends than anxious refusers (Ingul & Nordahl, 2013)

The 2nd step is to attend groups in schools, which they must join.

Primary school children
are stumbling at the 1st step,
and secondary school youth
at the 2nd step.

35

67% of SR adolescents with Soc Anx Dis (Bernstein et al., 2001);
65% of SR adolescents with Soc Anx Dis (Heyne et al., 2011)

social anxiety

"double dilemma"
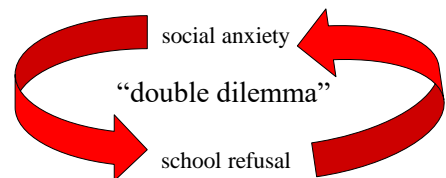
school refusal

(Heyne, Sauter, & Maynard, *Moderators and mediators of treatments for youth with school refusal or truancy*, 2015)

36
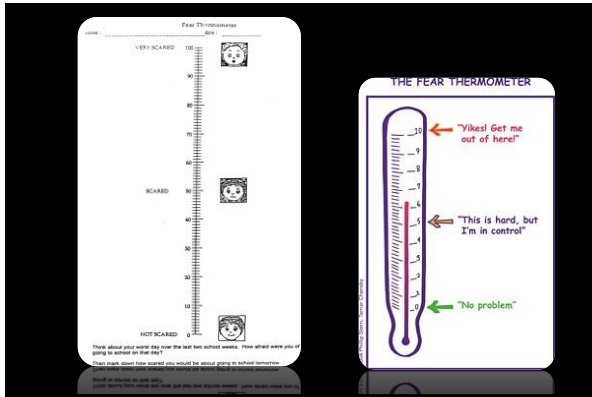
37

Unhelpful cognition

- More overgeneralizing (Maric et al., 2012)
- More thoughts about personal failure (Maric et al., 2012)
- Low self-efficacy for answering peers' questions (Heyne et al., 1998)
- Low self-efficacy perhaps maintaining school refusal (Maric et al., 2013)
- Problems seen as unsolvable (Place et al., 2000, 2002)
- Less cognitive reappraisal, more suppression (Hughes et al., 2010)

@school

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Overgeneralizing

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Underestimation of Ability to Cope

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Self-Statement Assessment
Young Person

CHILD:..

INTERVIEWER: .... DATE: ....

Tell me what thoughts you have about...

(a) going off to school

(b) being separated from mum and/or dad

(c) school work

(d) how clever you are

(e) other kids at school

(f) teachers

(g) the Principal

(h) (Anything the child would like to nominate regarding why he/she doesn't want to go to school.)

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Self-Statement Assessment
Young Person

CHILD:..

INTERVIEWER: .... DATE: ....

Tell me what thoughts you have about...

(a) going off to school

Well, um...I'm thinking like... I'm sort of like thinking if today's going to be ok or not. That upsets me a lot. Because I enjoy school, but when this is happening I get more upset over not going and what's happening than about going to school the next day, even though I'm upset and scared about going to school the next day.

[Any other thoughts?] I think that I'm sort of like... at school, I do get upset and I feel as if I'm lonely, scared, frightened, things like that. Like I've got nobody to talk to or...

Even if I did have the teacher to talk to I still wouldn't be able to talk to her as well as what I can talk to my mum or my dad. Because they [parents] just understand you. With the teacher, you feel weird talking to the teacher, even though I could talk to the teacher last year, because somehow she was different.

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Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for School Situations (12 items)

- Efficacy expectations for 12 situations
- Established 2-factor structure
- Treatment sensitivity
- Mediational role

(Heyne et al., *Behaviour Change*, 1998)

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Name: _____   Date: _____

The Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for School Situations

1. When going to school of a morning, how sure are you of being able to cope with separation from your mother or father?

1	2	3	4	5
Really sure I couldn't	Probably couldn't	Maybe	Probably could	Really sure I could

2. How sure are you that you could approach your teacher about something?

1	2	3	4	5
Really sure I couldn't	Probably couldn't	Maybe	Probably could	Really sure I could

3. How sure are you that you could do school work set by the teacher?

1	2	3	4	5
Really sure I couldn't	Probably couldn't	Maybe	Probably could	Really sure I could

4. How sure are you of being able to do tests?

1	2	3	4	5
Really sure I couldn't	Probably couldn't	Maybe	Probably could	Really sure I could

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parent psychopathology
parent overprotection
family functioning problems

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Slide 46
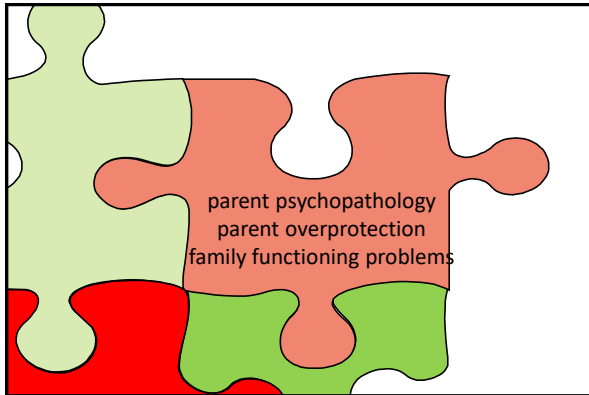
Parenting style + somatic symptoms

When a parent allows a 'sick' child to stay home, the child starts to feel better.

Then the parent may feel better about their decision to let the child stay at home.

Negative feelings and interactions are avoided.

(Nienhuis, *Schoolangst en schoolweigering bij kinderen*, 2012)

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Parenting style + somatic symptoms

Table 3. Number of Good and Poor Attenders Perceiving Parental Reaction Type to Use of Excuse of Illness to Miss School

Parental reaction	Good attenders ($n = 11$)	Poor attenders ($n = 12$)
Inconsistent	3	7
Gives up	0	3
Enforces attendance	5	2
Problem solving	3	0

(Sheppard, *Pastoral Care in Education*, 2005)

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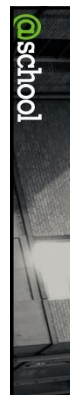
Self-Statement Assessment
Parents

"Tell me what thoughts you have about ..."

1. Why your child does not attend regularly / voluntarily
2. How important it is for parents to be involved in dealing with a child with school attendance difficulties
3. What things you as a parent can do to help your child
4. Who ought to be most responsible for the child's attendance at school
5. How your child would cope with regular attendance
6. How quickly a student ought to return after being away due to school refusal child

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@school

Tell me what thoughts you have about who ought to be most responsible for the child's attendance at school

PRE-TREATMENT

"Herself and then me, I presume. She's got to want to go. She's got to want to do it and then I'll support her."

POST-TREATMENT

"The parents. I think I originally said Shannon. I've realised they're probably too young to make that decision. They need parents to guide them."

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@school

Tell me what thoughts you have about who ought to be most responsible for the child's attendance at school

PRE-TREATMENT

"The school. There's not a lot we can do to get her back. The teachers have more knowledge about that."

POST-TREATMENT

"It's the parents' responsibility to get the child to school. Once at school, she's the school's responsibility."

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academic problems

limited cooperation

unpredictability
problematic student-teacher relationship

social isolation, loneliness

bullying

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Slide 52

Transitions
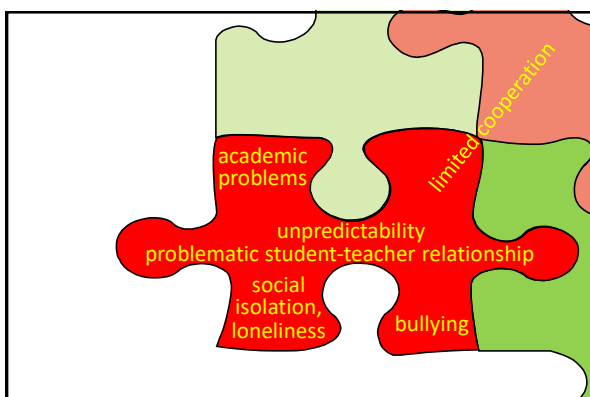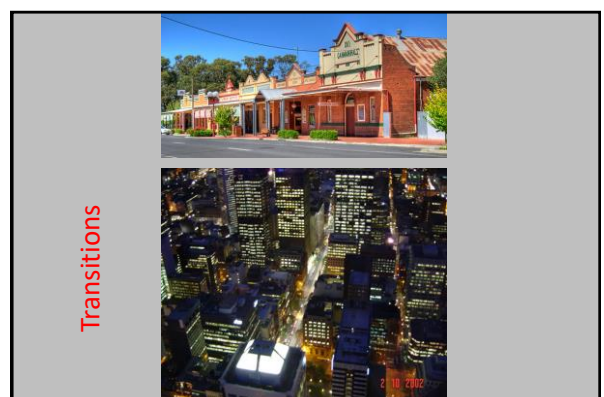
52

Precipitants to SR:
164 Children and Adolescents

bullying/teasing	35%
socially excluded	26%
change from PS to SC	21%
fear/difficulties with teacher	21%
illness in self	19%
academic problems	17%
separation problems	16%

(Pritchard, unpublished data)

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Precipitants to SR:
192 Adolescents

conflict at home	43%
conflict with peers	34%
academic difficulties	31%
family separation	21%
changing school / home	25%
physical illness	20%

(McShane et al., *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* 2001)
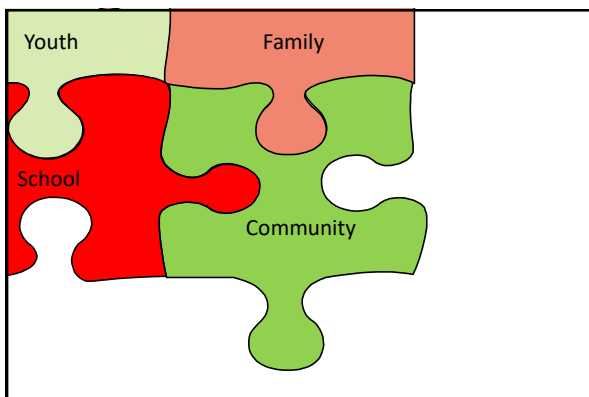
54

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Assess -> Understand -> Respond

1. Predisposing factors
2. Precipitating factors
3. Perpetuating factors
4. Protective factors

57

Assess -> Understand -> Respond

1. Predisposing factors
2. Precipitating factors
3. Perpetuating factors
4. Protective factors

58
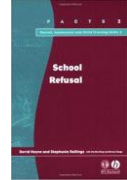
SR Interview: Youth (2/4)

- What things have been tried to get you back to school?
- What things do you think should be tried?
- What do you think will happen if nothing is done?
- If you could change one thing about school, what would it be?
- If you had to go to school tomorrow, what would be the hardest thing for you to face?

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SR Interview: Parent (1/2)

- Onset, duration, and severity of school refusal
- Precipitating factors
- Previous episodes of school refusal and how these were overcome
- Associated symptoms (e.g., anxiety; somatic complaints; depression)
- Step-by-step account of a typical morning (e.g., who is at home; what time the child gets out of bed; how refusal is expressed)

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Assess -> Understand -> Respond

1. Predisposing factors
2. Precipitating factors
3. Perpetuating factors
4. Protective factors

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Push-Pull Effect

Avoid Negative Experiences and Events

Approach Positive Experiences and Events

(Courtesy of W. Silverman)

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Social difficulties

High demands

Unfamiliar school

Feeling unwell

Little choice

Staff unaware

(Adapted from W. Silverman)

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Plays computer games

Sleeps

Watches TV

Gets pizza delivered for lunch

Spends time with mum

Hangs out with peers at mall
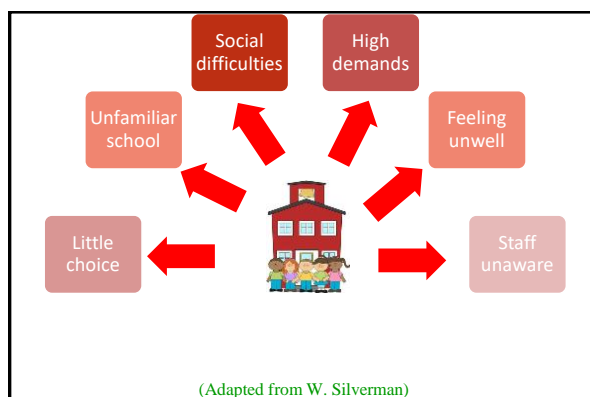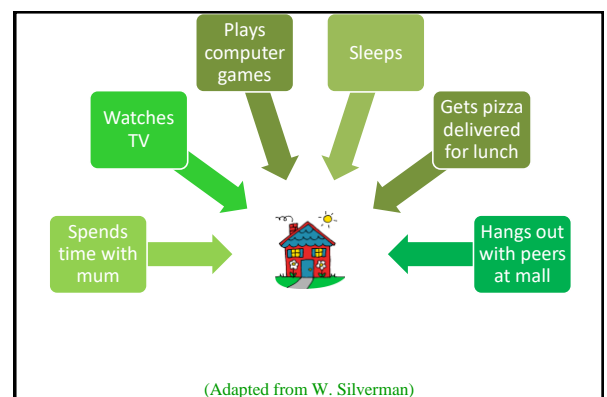
(Adapted from W. Silverman)

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Third Edition

When Children Refuse School
(Kearney & Albano, 2018)

Slide 66

@school

School Refusal Assessment Scale
functional categories

1: Avoidance of negative-affectivity provoking stimuli

"How often do you have bad feelings about going to school because you are afraid of something related to school (for example, tests, school bus, teacher, fire alarm)?"

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@school

School Refusal Assessment Scale
functional categories

1: Avoidance of negative-affectivity provoking stimuli

- focused on the young person
- psychoeducation
- relaxation training
- anxiety hierarchy
- exposure
- self-reward
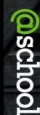
Slide 68

@school

School Refusal Assessment Scale
functional categories

2: Escape from aversive social/evaluative situations

"How often do you stay away from school because it is hard to speak with the other kids at school?"

School Refusal Assessment Scale

functional categories

2: Escape from aversive social/evaluative situations

- focused on the young person
- psychoeducation
- social skills training
- restructuring of social cognitions
- exposure

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School Refusal Assessment Scale
functional categories

3: Attention-seeking / separation anxiety

"How often do you feel you would rather be with your parents than go to school?"

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School Refusal Assessment Scale

functional categories

3: Attention-seeking / separation anxiety

- focused on the parents
- giving clear messages
- planned ignoring of inappropriate behaviour
- morning and evening routines
- consequences for non-attendance
- enforced attendance

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School Refusal Assessment Scale
functional categories

4: Behaviour yielding positive tangible reinforcement

"When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often do you leave the house and do something fun?"

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School Refusal Assessment Scale

functional categories

4: Behaviour yielding positive tangible reinforcement

- focused on parents and young person
- effective communication
- problem-solving
- contracts
- [monitoring non-attendance]
- [academic assistance]

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Slide 75
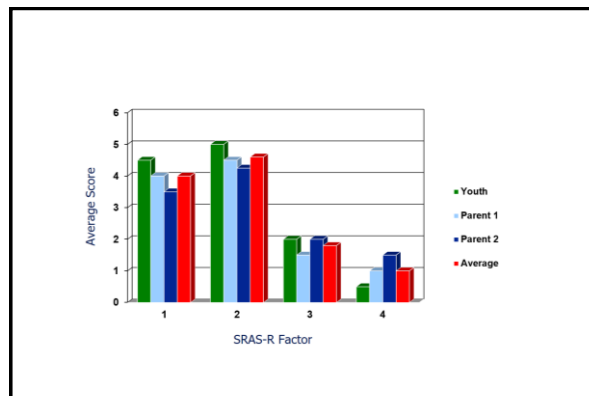
BUT …

"the [SRAS] may be less valuable when considering severe or chronic cases where many contextual influences may operate (Kearney, 2016)"

(Elliott & Place, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2017)

Slide 76

New assessment tool with breadth

Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP)

» Form and function of various SAPs (not SW)
» Youth (8-19) rate intensity & impact on attendance
» 48 items, 13 subscales
» Translations: German martin.knollmann@uni-due.de
                 English martin.knollmann@uni-due.de
                 Finnish johanna.sergejeff@valteri.fi

(Knollmann et al., *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 2018)

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Depression (6)
Social anxiety (5)
Performance anxiety (3)
Separation anxiety (4)
Agoraphobia/panic (4)
Somatic complaints (3)
School aversion/attractive alter-
natives (4)
Aggression (3)
Problems with peers (4)
Problems with teachers (3)
Problems with parents (3)
Problems within the family (3)
Dislike of specific school (3)

Assessment of the
presence and function of
symptoms related to SAPs

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Assessment of the
presence and function of
symptoms related to SAPs

Before or in school/school time...	Applies to me				That's why I miss school/attending school is hard for me			
	Never	Some-times	Often	Most of the times	Never	Some-times	Often	Most of the times
...I feel sad.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
...I'm afraid that I might have to say something in front of the whole class.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
...I feel unhappy because I only have a few friends at school.	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

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Psssssst, I want to tell you something about why I attended school ….

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Response to Intervention (RtI)

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Targeted Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Intervention

Increasing severity of absenteeism and increasing intensity of intervention
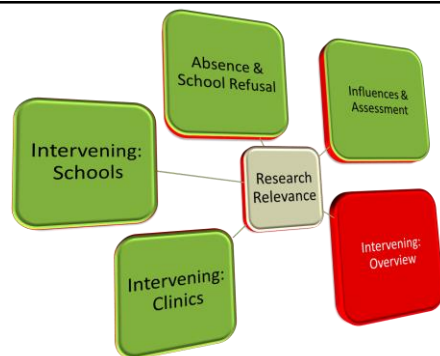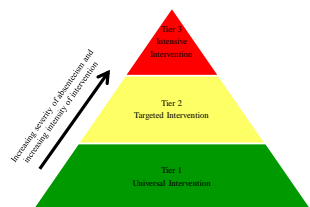
(Kearney & Graczyk, *Child and Youth Care Forum,* 2014)

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Managing School Absenteeism
at Multiple Tiers

(Kearney, 2016)

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Response to Intervention (RtI)

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Targeted Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Intervention
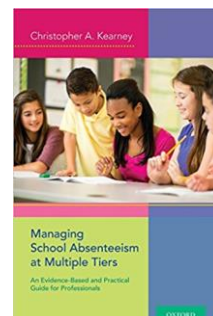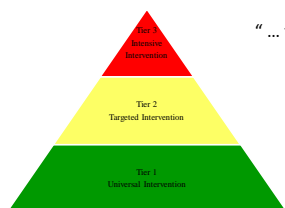
" … there is little guidance in the literature on what 'magic number' of absences is appropriate for intervening."

(Hobbs et al., *Justice Evaluation Journal*, 2018)

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From Research to Relevance

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Targeted Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Intervention

above 60% (Tier 4)

above 10%, 15% or 20%

above 1%, 3%, 5%, or 10%
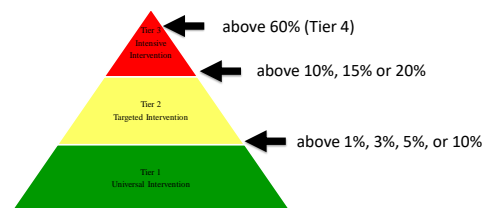
Decisions are based on resources and priorities

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How much absence is TOO much absence? ...

Currently:
report 16 hours of
unauthorised absences
in 4 consecutive weeks
(≈ 15-18% of school-time)

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How much absence is TOO much absence? ...

?

86

How much absence is TOO much absence? ...

"Differentiating between
nonproblematic and problematic
school absenteeism: How much
absence is too much absence?"

SAVE THE
DATE

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Absence &
School Refusal

Influences &
Assessment

Intervening:
Schools

Research
Relevance

Intervening:
Overview

Intervening:
Clinics
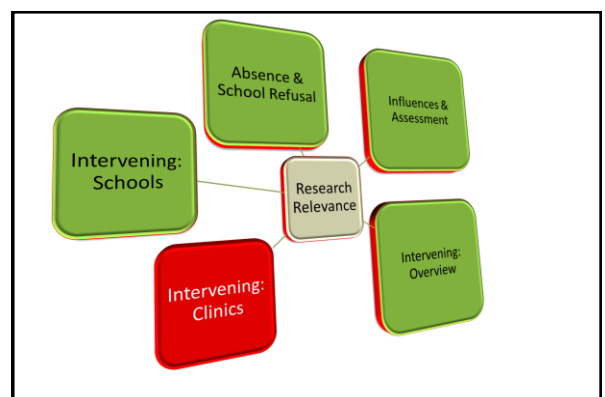
88
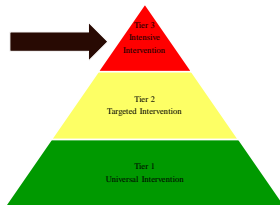
89

Treatment for SR vis-à-vis Anx or Dep

- Higher drop-out (56%) when Anx manual used
  (Beidas et al., 2010)
- SR presented "an obstacle" for TADS clinicians
  (Kennard et al., 2005)

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Treatment for school refusal:
Systematic review & meta-analysis

8 rigorous studies (6 RCTs, 2 QEDs)

- 6 published, 2 unpublished
- Target: CBT (3), BT (1), CT (1), CBT+med (2), Rogerian (1)
- Comparison: alternate (4), placebo (2), no-treatment (1), NS (1)
- Australia, US, England, Canada, Kuwait, China
- 399 youth (target intervention = 204, comparison = 195)

(Maynard, Heyne, et al., *Research on Social Work Practice*, 2018)

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MEAN EFFECTS ON ATTENDANCE (PSYCHOSOCIAL)

Study Name	Hedges' g	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Comparison Condition
Richardson (1992)	0.10	-0.76	0.96	AT
Last (1998)	0.28	-0.39	0.96	AT
Sahel (1989)	0.51	0.40	0.61	NS
Heyne (2002)	0.58	-0.03	1.19	AT
King (1998)	0.63	-0.09	1.34	WLC
Blagg (1984)	2.73	1.13	4.33	AT
Grand Mean effect	0.54	0.22	0.86	

AT: Alternative Treatment
NS: Not Specified
WLC: Wait List Control

Favors Comparison Group   Favors Treatment Group

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MEAN EFFECTS ON ANXIETY (PSYCHOSOCIAL)

Study Name	Hedges' g	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Comparison Condition
Richardson (1992)	-0.85	-1.71	0.01	AT
Heyne (2002)	-0.01	-0.60	0.60	AT
Last (1998)	0.01	-0.75	0.76	AT
King (1998)	0.97	0.29	1.64	WLC
Grand Mean effect	0.06	-0.63	0.75	

-2.0 -1.5 -1.0 -0.5 0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0

Favors Comparison Group   Favors Treatment Group

AT: Alternative Treatment
WLC: Wait List Control

93

Slide 94
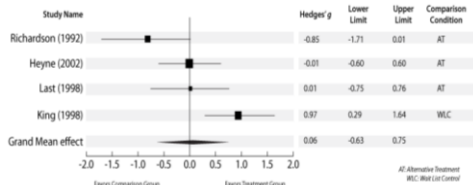
Treatment for school refusal:
Systematic review & meta-analysis

1. effect on attendance at post (an important goal)
2. no effect on anxiety at post (for the group)
   - for some, ↓ anxiety may help ↑ attendance
   - for others, ... may help ↑ attendance
3. medication does not seem to improve effects
4. lack of rigorous support for non-CBT treatment

(Maynard, Heyne, et al., *Research on Social Work Practice*, 2018)

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Pharmacotherapy

Review of pharmacologic treatments
(Tobon et al., *J of Child & Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 2018)

- 6 RCTs or QEDs: SSRI fluoxetine (2), TCA imipramine (3), TCA clomipramine (1), Benzodiazepine Alprazolam (1)

- 'Limited data to say whether adding medication helps; underpowered studies may explain lack of added benefit'

- 'Consider CBT first, or CBT combined with medication'; 'Combination may be first line because SR is an emergency'

Review of antidepressant medication
(Melvin & Gordon, *Cognitive & Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

- 6 RCT's, 2 open trials, 6 case studies/series, 1 observational study

- No clear benefit in combining newer antidepressants with CBT

- Considerations for clinicians contemplating medication

95

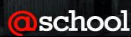
Slide 96

Essence of CBT for School Refusal

C – cognitions are targeted
B – behaviours are targeted
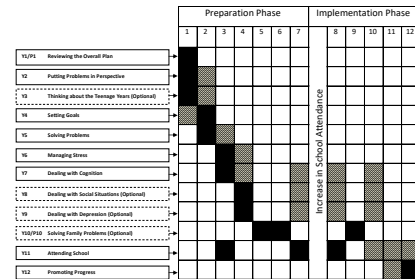T – therapeutic relationship essential

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Essence of CBT for School Refusal

- comprehensive; planned yet flexible
- requires collaboration & coordination
- preparation phase before implementation

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Figure 1: Guide for sequencing and pacing modules with the young person.

Note: Solid squares indicate the common timing of module introduction and continuation; hatched squares indicate possible introduction or continuation of a module. Excerpt from: Heyne, D., & Sauter, F. M. (2013). School refusal. In C. A. Essau, & T. H. Ollendick (Eds.), The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of the treatment of childhood and adolescent anxiety. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Limited.

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Slide 99

Assess -> Understand -> Respond

1. Predisposing factors	"socially awkward"
2. Precipitating factors	groups already formed
3. Perpetuating factors	minimal social contact
4. Protective factors	had friendships in PS

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Slide 100

Figure 1: Guide for sequencing and pacing modules with the young person.

Note: Solid squares indicate the common timing of module introduction and continuation; hatched squares indicate possible introduction or continuation of a module. Excerpt from: Heyne, D., & Sauter, F. M. (2013). School refusal. In C. A. Essau, & T. H. Ollendick (Eds.), The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of the treatment of childhood and adolescent anxiety. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Limited.
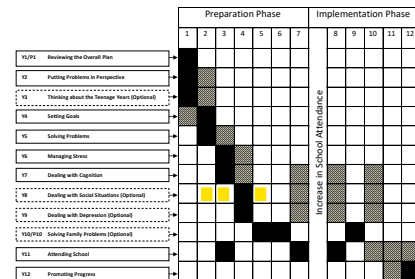
100

Working with the young person
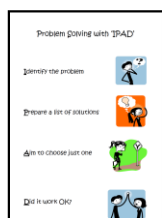
coping skills

101

Working with the young person

coping skills   exposure/re-engagement

102

Increasing attendance: in practice

1. Consider (school placement; preliminary exposure)
2. Decide (return type, steps, rewards, supports)
3. Arrange (lowered hurdles at school)
4. Start (with an 'easily achievable challenge')
5. Reinforce (effort as well as achievement)
6. Re-work the plan (in a relaxed fashion)

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Imaginal Systematic Desensitization

- touch school clothes;
- look at photographs of school;
- walk halfway to school;
- walk up to school;
- walk around the outside of the school;
- walk around the outside of the school in school uniform;
- walk around the school and inside the school gates;
- meet with the class teacher, with parents present;
- meet with the class teacher, without parents;
- attend empty class with teacher;
- attend regular class for first lesson;
- attend regular class until lunch;
- attend regular class for whole day.

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Variations on a theme …

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY A. CORELLI
for Violin and Piano
Arr. by F. Kreisler
G. Tartini

- Stay until 9.30, then 10.30, then 11.30 …

- Start at 2pm, then 1pm, then 12pm …

- Start with lunch, then work outward …

- Start with favourite class, then 2nd favourite, …

- Start full-time in library, then increase class time

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Working with the parents

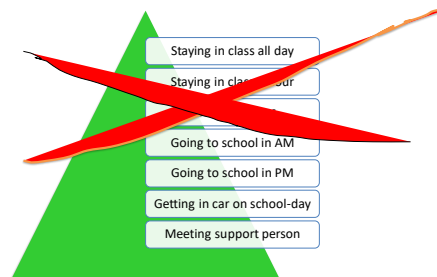facilitating exposure/re-engagement

106

Foster a United Approach

"… Mr Thomson hoped that negotiation with the school about timetable, along with firm reassurance to Frank, would obtain their son's return to school. Mrs Thomson, however, believed it was necessary to spend hours each day with Frank, to offer him support and understanding"

(Bryce & Baird, *Journal of Adolescence*, 1986)

Moms and Dads will never see eye-to-eye on every parenting issue…

…But you can agree to work together and speak with one voice and one message to your teens.

107

Address Family Accommodation

Staying in class all day
Staying in class for an hour
Going to school in AM
Going to school in PM
Getting in car on school-day
Meeting support person

108

Promote Effective Positive Reinforcement

109

Minimize Unintended Rewards

Approach Positive Experiences and Events →

- What are the unintended rewards?
- How can these be managed?

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Making home less appealing than school

Parents may sometimes feel that if they allow their child to stay home for a while he/she will settle down and be better able to cope with school. However, during the day the child may be inadvertently 'rewarded' for staying at home, learning that home has many advantages over school. At home young people can use time in their own way and may have access to the refrigerator, television, computer, pets, games and toys. They may also enjoy having the sole attention of a parent. Finally, they are 'escaping' from the school situation into the familiar and comfortable surroundings of home. These factors can be quite powerful in maintaining school avoidance and need to be addressed by reducing them to a minimum.

111

Communicate Clear Expectations

The student must be in school or at the doctor's office during school hours. Physical complaints are not ignored; they are acknowledged as present but insufficient for missing regular activities.

(Evans, *Psychology in the Schools*, 2000)

'The Rule'

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28

How quickly should the young person return?
And how firm should parents be?

Allow the young person to determine just when full-time attendance will be resumed (Patterson, 1965)

- -

Rapid, enforced return managed by parents within a few sessions (Kennedy, 1965)

113

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1. Pressure to the point of **harshness** (Klein, 1945)

2. Focusing on return **interferes with therapy** (Waldfogel et al., 1957)

3. Failing to **insist on return** feeds neurotic family patterns (Eisenberg, 1959)

4. Need **compromise**, adjust demands to the child's capacity (Davidson, 1960)

5. Rapid, **enforced return** managed by parents in a few sessions (Kennedy, 1965)

6. Allow the **YP to decide** when attendance will be resumed (Patterson, 1965)

7. Child needs to **lose a carefully constructed showdown** (Leventhal et al., 1967)

8. **Firmness is a support**, not a hostile rejection of the YP's needs (Hersov, 1985)

9. **Precipitate a crisis**; insist on the adolescent's early return (Bryce & Baird, 1986)

10. Occasionally, **forced attendance** (Kearney & Bensaheb, 2006)

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Adolescents are more likely to resist, and more physically capable of resisting. They may want to decide for themselves, when and how they return to school.
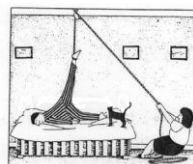

(Heyne et al., *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 2014)

115

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autonomy-granting
('supportive')

authoritative
('steering')

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Extra attention to family work

Family functioning

- conflict: cause & consequence of SR (Kearney & Silverman, 1995; McShane et al., 2001)

- more problems in families of adolescent SR youth (Carless et al., 2013)

- maladaptive in 1/2 - 2/3 families (Bernstein et al., 1999 ; Kearney & Silverman, 1995)

- ↓ independence (Bernstein et al., 1990; Kearney & Silverman, 1995; Hansen et al., 1998; Place et al., 2005)

Family work

- increase connection and flexibility (Bernstein et al., 1999)

- prevent/manage conflicts, also about school attendance (Heyne et al., 2008)

- promote positive interactions to reduce stress (Heyne et al., 2008)

- work on independence (Place et al., 2000) & 'accommodation' (Taboas et al., 2015)

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Components of family work

1. Introduction
2. Explore current communication *
3. Educate about effective communication
4. Practice of effective communication
5. Explore current problem-solving
6. Educate about effective problem-solving
7. Practice of effective problem-solving

Home tasks based on 2 to 7

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"K Family"

Helpful	Unhelpful
Listen to each other	Both being pig-headed
Keep listening	Arguing about listening
Be patient	Need to have the last say
No name calling	Getting off track
Avoid arguing	Believe that someone has to win

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I-Statements

e.g., I felt angry when you didn't call, because I waited all night for a phone call and now I'm very tired (vs "you're totally irresponsible")

e.g., I'd really like it if you could take me to the party next week because I so want to see my friends there (vs "you're so mean and never let me do anything").

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30

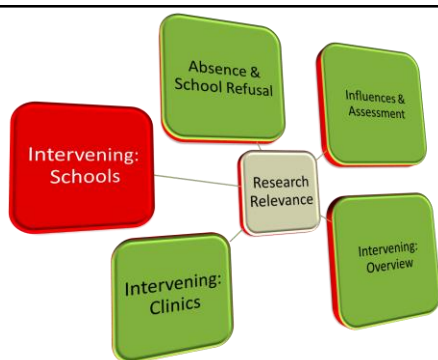|	
Mother:	He won't do his homework
Father:	She puts more pressure on him about doing his homework than I do
YP:	She's always nagging me about homework
Consensus:	There is disagreement about how much time is spent on homework

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Research, Relevance, and Realism

"While schools typically bear the responsibility for monitoring and responding to absenteeism, the drivers of absence may not be related to factors that schools can realistically address."

Educators cannot do this alone: The community needs to be included

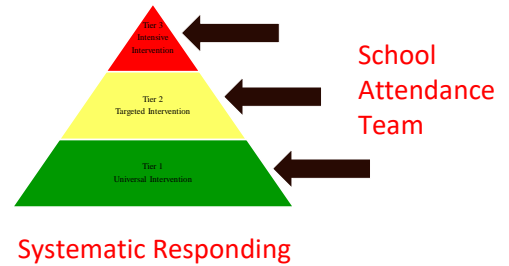(Hancock et al., *British Educational Research Journal,* 2018)

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Research, Relevance, <u>and</u> Realism

"The fine line that you're always walking …
'this might be a mental health issue', 'this is something else',
'there's a family thing here' … 'this is a naughty kid and we're pandering to it'.
And you don't always get it right as a school or as individuals,
you sometimes make the wrong call one way or the other."

(Finning et al., *Educational and Behavioural Difficulties,* 2018)

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Slide 126

Tier 3
Intensive
Intervention

Tier 2
Targeted Intervention

Tier 1
Universal Intervention

School Attendance Team

Systematic Responding

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Slide 127

School Attendance Team
(Possible tasks)

Tier 1 Polish and promote policy (e.g., threshold for responding)
Prevention (e.g., educate about risk factors)
Timely identification (e.g., regular monitoring)
Assessment as needed (e.g., contact teachers / parents)

Tier 2 Early intervention (e.g., arrange peer and mentor support)

Tier 3 Referral (e.g., for anxiety/depression/conduct)
Support (e.g., arranging graded return to school)

(Ingul, Havik, & Heyne, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

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Slide 128

School Attendance Team
(Tips 1 of 2)

Use existing team structures; share resources (e.g., across schools)

Monitor attendance at individual and group level

Gather other data as needed, at individual and group level

Plan and coordinate intervention (all Tiers)

Evaluate response to intervention (all Tiers)

Meet weekly or fortnightly

(Ingul, Havik, & Heyne, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

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School Attendance Team
(Tips 2 of 2)

Conduct 6-monthly or 12-monthly review and re-prioritising

Safeguard the team's work (e.g., involve management)

Support the team's work (e.g., involve administration)

Solicit stakeholder input (e.g., parent view on policy and practice)

Connect with local services (e.g., include MH representative)

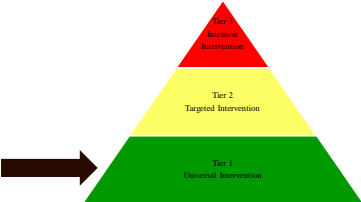(Ingul, Havik, & Heyne, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

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Mental Education+Health

School Attendance Team for Tiers 1, 2, 3
(Ingul et al., *Cognitive & Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

- Year-level Coordinator
- Local Mental Health
- School Counsellor
- Local Education Office
- School Leadership & Admin

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Tier 1: Promoting regular attendance for all students

- School climate
- Safety orientation
- Social-emotional learning
- Parent involvement
- School readiness/transition
- Staff orientation
- Customized curriculum

Review attendance 2-weekly

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention
Tier 2 Targeted Intervention
Tier 1 Universal Intervention

(Kearney & Graczyk, *Child and Youth Care Forum,* 2014)

131

Facilitating Parent Engagement
(Tips from School Staff)

Friendly face on arrival (front desk, office staff)
Be available (after school; open-door policy)
Take time to listen to parents
Visit their home, be 'on their turf'
Make telephone contact, also about positive things
Other communication (email, newsletters)
Invite parents to support/attendance meetings
Invite parents to a sausage sizzle, parent evenings
Involve parents in decision-making
Help with the family's physical needs

132

(https://www.educationnext.org/how-to-tackle-student-absenteeism/)

133

(Kearney & Albano, *When Children Refuse School,* 2018)

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Intervention via school staff

treatment ≈ lowering the (various) hurdles

1. Social difficulties
2. Emotional difficulties
3. Academic difficulties
4. Other, namely: ………………

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Intervention via school staff

treatment ≈ lowering the (various) hurdles

12 year old girl with social anxiety
– able to carry her school-bag with her
– moved locker location
– involvement in structured peer activities

12 year old boy with adjustment difficulty
– a 'drill' on arrival at school to encourage a coping attitude & outline daily expectations
– a meeting at the end of the school day to provide social and tangible reinforcement

137

"It is challenging enough to encourage a school to adapt its prosocial environment for the benefit of all students (Banerjee et al., 2013),

but more complex still to encourage an organisation to make such changes in support of a single individual."

(Guilford & Miller, *Coping with life by coping with school?: School refusal in young people*, 2015)

138

School-based intervention (5 key attitudes)

1. Embrace school policies (e.g., bullying)
2. Realise it can be difficult to verbalise difficulties
3. Be available for visits by an anxious student
4. Remain kind and firm (avoiding ultimatums) *
5. Nurture our own optimism and persistence

(Heyne & Rollings, *School Refusal,* 2002; Richardson, *Prevention and Treatment of School Refusal: A Collaborative Approach,* 2013)

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School-based intervention (5 points for preparation)

1. Clarify (coordinator, mentor, communication flow)
2. Decide which hurdles to lower
3. Prepare the young person for return to school
4. Prepare the other students and school staff
5. Prepare and partner with parents (e.g., coaching)

140

Behavioural coaching: Set up routines

- Adhere to 'school day' routine
- Prepare for school the night before
- Go to bed at age appropriate time
- Wake up in the morning
- Get dressed
- Remove competing activities

(Adapted from W. Silverman)

141

Behavioural coaching: Minimize rewards

Approach Positive Experiences and Events

The child is not allowed to do anything at home (during school-time) that they wouldn't be allowed to do at school.

142

Cognitive coaching: Need for action

If you're child had a serious illness,
for which attendance at a hospital was required, but
your child was afraid of attending hospitals, would
you not take your child to that hospital
for much needed help?

143

Cognitive coaching: Dropping the rope

144

School-based intervention
(5 points for implementation)

1. Monitor activity, distress, lateness, absence
2. Have a plan for somatic complaints
3. Communicate with parents
4. Collaborate with mental health services
5. Reinforce small steps towards big achievements

145

Somatic complaints during school-time ...

– Let staff know about the results of the medical check-up
– Identify a safety space
– Consider when/how the student can leave class to go to the safety space
– Consider when the student can make contact with parents
– Support the student's use of anxiety-management skills

146

"Despite little experimental research on how to effectively reduce absences—or perhaps because of it—many education organizations use awards to motivate good attendance."

(Robinson et al., *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, 2018)

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Prospective   Retrospective
"= control"   "< control"

(Robinson et al., *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, 2018)

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Slide 149

Making Sense out of Incentives: A Framework for Considering the Design, Use, and Implementation of Incentives to Improve Attendance

Rekha Balu[a] and Stacy B. Ehrlich[b]

[a]MDRC; [b]University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

" … the literature provides **little guidance** on whether and how policymakers and practitioners ought to use incentives"

"**consider what problem the incentive was trying to solve**, … and if it sought to influence behavior of [those making decisions about school attendance]."

(Balu & Ehrlich, *JESPAR*, 2018)

Slide 150

Making Sense out of Incentives: A Framework for Considering the Design, Use, and Implementation of Incentives to Improve Attendance

Rekha Balu[a] and Stacy B. Ehrlich[b]

[a]MDRC; [b]University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

(Balu & Ehrlich, *JESPAR*, 2018)

Slide 151

Education + Mental Health (Adapted from L. McKay-Brown)

By Mental Health	By Education	Conducted Together
• Individual sessions with YP	• Special classroom	• Evening parent group
• Specialist assessments	• School liaison	• Classroom group program
• Individual parent work	• Develop/deliver curriculum	• Family phone support
• Psychiatric/medication review	• Pos. support plans	• Home visits (if needed)
• Care coordination	• Pos. behaviour interventions	• Psychoed. for partner school
• Family therapeutic support	• Implement/review ILPs	• Return to school plans
	• Community based excursions	• Travel training
	• Family communication/liaison	• Transfer to new school, if needed

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Slide 152

"In2School: A shared response to school refusal"

(Lisa McKay-Brown, University of Melbourne, AUSTRALIA; J. Ring & R. McGrath, Travancore School, AUSTRALIA; C. Mitchell, Royal Children's Hospital, AUSTRALIA)

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE
DATE
Inaugural INSA Conference.
October 16th-18th 2019 in Oslo, Norway.
This conference offers a wide palate of topics for school
personnel, practitioners, policy-makers, researchers, and
academics from all disciplines.
Click here for the details.

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Questions &
Comments

heyne@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

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