

Project 2: Supporting parents and teachers to work together to address emotional and behavioural problems in children.

Proposed supervisory team

- Professor Cathy Creswell
- Dr Helen Manley

Background and rationale

Emotional and behavioural problems are common among children and young people and are associated with substantial costs for individuals, families, and society. We developed an efficient and accessible therapist-supported platform (OSI) for treating anxiety problems among primary school aged children, have demonstrated that it is effective ([Creswell et al., 2024](#)), and are now implementing it at scale within NHS and associated child mental health services. Parents/carers and clinicians have told us that are keen for a similar intervention for managing challenging behaviour and 'big emotions' so we are in the process of adapting OSI for this purpose.

Alongside our work on OSI we have worked with children, parents and teachers to develop teacher training to reduce anxiety within school settings through classroom management approaches. Initial feasibility testing demonstrated that the training was positively received by school staff, however schools required flexible approaches to training delivery. In parallel our colleague Dr Abby Russell at the University of Exeter has codesigned an [online platform](#) for training school staff in developing strengths-based, neurodiversity affirmative practices for supporting primary school aged children with ADHD. Initial feasibility also showed a positive response however indicated that teachers might benefit from guidance and support as they implement the programme (e.g. from the same clinicians that are increasingly delivering OSI in their routine practice). Bringing together these innovations provides an exciting opportunity to support teachers to minimise emotional and behavioural problems in the school environment.

Proposed Aims

- Codesign expanded online teacher training content to support classroom-based management and prevention of emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Evaluate the feasibility of delivering this teacher- focused approach, alongside parent-directed OSI.
- Explore the key mechanisms of action and drivers of implementation.

Potential Methodologies

- Systematic review
- Qualitative interviews
- Establish and work with Expert Reference Groups
- Feasibility testing in schools

The student would have the opportunity to work with the wider team who will be focused on adapting OSI for child behavioural problems.