

MOVING FORWARD

EDUCARE'S
Independent Health
and Wellbeing
Publication

OUR STORY

EDUCARE has been helping
families for over 25 years

TECH *Obsessed?*

Device addiction explained

Overthinking It?

When worry and anxiety are no longer helpful

Is Your Child School Ready?

The skills young children
need to start 'big school'

Parenting ADVICE

How to have a happier
home life

Navigating Life ON THE SPECTRUM

Support for children and teenagers
experiencing Autism Spectrum Disorder.



Celebrating
25
YEARS

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WELCOME

to your family health and wellbeing magazine

This publication has been created to help you understand not only what we do here at EDUCARE but importantly, to provide you with some tips and professional advice from our specialists about creating a happier, more harmonious family environment and future.



The Story of EDUCARE

Established in 1999, Educare was designed to provide a multi-service centre to “unlock the potential” of young people, enhance their learning and improve their long-term wellbeing. And importantly, to help families thrive!

Over the past 25 years, Educare has assisted countless families in the Newcastle and Hunter Region, and even beyond!, empowering them to achieve their goals through integrated, expert guidance and support.

This magazine provides insights into EDUCARE’s services, addressing common challenges faced by children, teenagers, and adults, along with practical strategies for improved personal and family wellbeing.

Interested individuals and families are encouraged to reach out for appointments, as EDUCARE eagerly welcomes both new and returning clients.



*The word **EDUCARE** encompasses both ‘Education and Care’. It is our belief that through education and care **WE CAN BEST HELP TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL AND ENHANCE THE WELLBEING** of young people, their families and even adult clients.*



About the Directors

The Founding Director, Dr Anne-Marie Youlden, was born in Finland and initially trained as a Primary Teacher within the Finnish education system prior to pursuing a career in psychology. Anne-Marie’s educational background also includes post-graduate studies and research in the UK, USA and Australia which served as the foundation for her subsequent work as a Child and Educational Psychologist and the establishment of EDUCARE.

Dr Bruce Youlden joined the EDUCARE Team as the Managing Director in 2019 following a 42 year career in Education and Administration. His leadership experience is now important to the continuing growth and development of the practice.



An Essential Service For Newcastle, The Hunter and Beyond

EDUCARE had its original offices in Belmont and Warners Bay. In 2011, we relocated into the primary professional and medical hub of Charlestown where we set up a welcoming and friendly multi-disciplinary medical and health centre with over 30 consulting and conference rooms.

Clients can also access our services online. Sessions can take place via telehealth, meaning those who find it hard to travel still have access to our specialist clinicians via online video calls.

Our Approach

The clinicians at EDUCARE are focused on creating a positive therapeutic environment. We want our clients and their families to look forward to their appointment. No matter how challenging change can be.

To achieve this, we adopt a collaborative approach with our clients as well as between our specialists. This means working together to understand a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan that meets the special needs of each individual. We also collaborate with schools and other providers and are pleased to be registered with Medicare, NDIS and Private Health Funds.

At your initial appointment, a plan for you or your family member will be discussed in detail. There will also be regular reviews to demonstrate what progress has been made.



Creating Happier Families

Many families and individuals struggle for a long time before reaching out for help. Parents often see their child or teen experiencing difficulties with everyday life but do not realise solutions to their problems exist, and are available!

Sometimes the solution can be a matter of talking things through. Other times and where appropriate, a Medical specialist may recommend medication that helps to address some medical related conditions impacting their wellbeing.

EDUCARE specialists have worked with tens of thousands of a variety of clients since we opened our doors over 25 years ago. Often, they let us know that they felt like a weight was lifted off their shoulders. With the support of a caring and experienced team, there was finally a way for them to 'move forward'.

It is a privilege to be able to serve the people of Newcastle and the Hunter in this way. And our team looks forward to doing so for many years to come.



FRIENDSHIP AND **LEARNING**

We all want our children and teenagers to get along well with their peers and do well in school, but you may have noticed your son or daughter isn't reaching their full potential.

There is no such thing as a 'normal' child or teenager, but some do find themselves struggling to cope with everyday life compared to their peers. As a parent, you might wonder if this is due to maturity or question whether there is something else at play.

Take a look at some of the main concerns parents bring to us at EDUCARE. If you recognise your child or teen in any of the questions below, reach out to us, because help is always available.

01

Underachievement & lack of motivation

- Do you feel as though your child could achieve so much more at school?
- Is motivation and confidence lacking with their schoolwork?

Underachievement and a lack of motivation have a direct bearing on learning outcomes. The underlying cause could be academic, social or related to emotional anxiety.

02

Learning difficulties

- Does your child have difficulty in one or more subject areas at school?
- Is he or she struggling with reading, writing or maths?
- Is homework a constant battle?

Learning problems, if left unidentified and untreated, can compound over time and have a negative influence on both school performance and attitude. Thankfully, early intervention can help get things on the right track.

03

Concentration problems

- Is your child easily distracted?
- Do they daydream or fail to complete tasks?
- Do you suspect the problem could be ADHD or something else?

Concentration problems can occur for a variety of reasons. There are many techniques available to help young people improve their skills in this area.

04

Social difficulties

- Does your child find it hard to fit in with their peers?
- Is their behaviour in social settings often inappropriate or embarrassing?

Social difficulties often have quite a negative influence on a student's self-esteem and academic performance. Peer acceptance and improved comfort in social environments can be achieved with the right help.

05

Personal confidence & self-esteem

- Does your child sometimes need a confidence boost? Do they suffer from low self-esteem?
 - Does your child often feel they are a failure or perhaps never good enough?
- It's important that students are provided with the right strategies to develop the necessary life skills and personal confidence to realise their full potential.

06

School readiness

- Is your child really ready for 'big school'?
- Does your child lack physical endurance or have difficulty adjusting socially?

Your child may seem to be intellectually ready for school, yet immature emotionally and socially. Our specialists can help you make the right decisions about starting school at the right time to ensure long term academic and social success.

07

Gifted learning needs

- Could your child be a gifted learner?
- Do they thrive on being challenged?

Identifying and meeting the special needs of gifted and talented students is essential to their future development and providing the appropriate enrichment. EDUCARE can help tailor the right intervention for your child.

08

Emotional & anxiety problems

- Is your child having difficulty adjusting to changes within the home environment?
- Are you noticing signs of anxiety or increased sadness?

Emotional issues encountered at school or home can vary from mild anxiety to significant mood problems, depression and even school phobia. Early identification and targeted treatment that helps you to understand how the issues arose is essential in preventing these difficulties from having an ongoing impact on your child's future.

09

Demanding & defiant behaviour

- Is your child becoming more demanding, stubborn or defiant?
- Is parenting more frustrating than enjoyable?

Strong-willed and demanding children can make family life a daily challenge. Many problems can be resolved or minimised with professional intervention. Effective strategies can enable children, teens and parents to work through conflict and behavioural difficulties together. As a result, you and your child and teenager will be able to enjoy a happier, more relaxed family environment.



“

*EDUCARE's specialists have **WORKED WITH THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS** to help them overcome difficulties with learning, behaviour and social skills.*

How EDUCARE CAN HELP

*Take a look at the services provided
by the specialists at EDUCARE*

EDUCARE's highly experienced specialists provide assessments, diagnostic and treatment services for children, teens and adults from across Newcastle, the Hunter Region and beyond.

Our specialist clinicians have helped our clients overcome learning, social, emotional and mental barriers for over 25 years, helping them improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

Take a look at the specialist services we provide, then contact us to book your first appointment today so we can help.



Psychology

EDUCARE's psychologists work to understand the way people think, feel, behave and learn, and explore how these factors can influence their everyday lives.

A psychologist does not prescribe medication but instead relies on working together via discussion to understand what is happening for you and recommend evidence-based behavioural and cognitive techniques to enhance happiness, self-esteem and general wellbeing.

When working with children, our psychologists may also consult with teachers, parents and other medical professionals from EDUCARE to help determine the optimal course of action.



Speech-Language Pathology

EDUCARE's speech and language therapists can help your child gain confidence by working to build on their speech and literacy skills.

If you believe your child may not be at the same level as their siblings or peers with speech, reading, writing or social skills, one of our speech-language therapists can help.

After attending this therapy, many children find they can enjoy learning new things, develop better relationships and gain new confidence at school.



Occupational Therapy

Our Occupational Therapists can help your child develop coordination, body awareness and confidence to improve their behaviour, social skills and quality of life.

This type of therapeutic intervention is highly beneficial for children who have sensory seeking/processing issues, poor body awareness, low muscle tone, behavioural or movement difficulties.

With the help of an OT, children can feel more confident in themselves, enjoy learning at school and develop the skills they need to participate in a range of age-appropriate activities.



Behaviour Support

Our Registered Behaviour Support Practitioners (RBSPs) are trained professionals, certified to offer specialist behaviour support services. They have expertise in behaviour analysis and positive behaviour interventions, helping individuals with diverse needs such as developmental disabilities or mental health challenges.

EDUCARE's RBSPs conduct assessments, create tailored behaviour management plans, and collaborate with families, educators and health professionals to implement evidence-based interventions. All designed to enhance an individual's quality of life and foster independence within their community.



Psychiatry

Psychiatry focuses on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental, emotional and behavioural disorders.

Psychiatrists are medically qualified doctors who can recommend treatment through a combination of prescribed medication and psychotherapy where appropriate.

EDUCARE's psychiatrists are skilled in treating children, adolescents and adults for a range of complex, chronic or temporary mental health issues, including schizophrenia, bipolar, psychosis depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).



Neurology

Neurologists can help treat difficulties involving the brain, spinal cord, nerves and muscles.

Common neurological issues include abnormal behaviour, difficulties with memory, epilepsy, involuntary movements, seizures, headache and migraine.

Your EDUCARE neurologist will review your history before potentially recommending neuroimaging such as an MRI, CT scan or other tests, and then work with you and other specialists to determine the best course of action.

At EDUCARE, the Neurologist only treats clients over 16 years of age.



Paediatrics

The Paediatricians available for consultation at EDUCARE treat children who are experiencing a broad range of medical, behavioural and developmental difficulties.

Our Paediatricians work closely with their colleagues at EDUCARE to provide a multi-faceted approach and treatment, and can see patients from birth up to 18 years old for ongoing assessment and intervention.

Make an appointment with EDUCARE

Many of our specialists require a referral from a GP before an appointment can be arranged.

Speak to your GP and request an EDUCARE specialist, then contact us on 02 4943 4444 to book your first visit. We look forward to seeing you soon.

EDUCARE is registered and accredited with NDIS, Medicare and Private Health Insurance Funds. This allows us to support families and individuals throughout Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland and more broadly, the Hunter Region.

Your EDUCARE APPOINTMENT

*From your first call to ongoing appointments,
here's what to expect when you visit EDUCARE.*

EDUCARE has been proudly serving families in the Newcastle-Hunter region since 1999. Unlike individual providers, our team of specialists are able to work together to help you, or your child or teenager to achieve their personal goals.

We are truly concerned about positive self-development, and as such our approach is individualised to meet your personal needs and enhance confidence and wellbeing.

Take a look at what you can expect when you visit us at EDUCARE:



Making Your Appointment

Psychology, Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy Appointments

For Psychology, Speech Pathology, or Occupational Therapy appointments, you may contact us directly to schedule an appointment without the need for a referral from your GP.

However, if your GP provides a referral with a Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP) or an Enhanced Primary Care Plan (EPC) for the allied health service you wish to attend, please bring this to your initial appointment in order to receive the Medicare rebate.

Medical Specialist Appointments

In order to make an appointment to see a Medical Specialist you will be required to obtain a GP Referral detailing your concerns. The referral should be addressed to either the Medical Specialist by name or the type of specialist required, i.e. Neurology, Psychiatry, Paediatrics. The referral should be presented to reception prior to your first appointment in order to receive the Medicare rebate.



Your First Consultation

The main focus of the first consultation with the clinician is to discuss the challenges you are currently facing, your goals for the future and how they can assist in achieving the desired outcomes. They may recommend certain types of assessment to assist in the design of your treatment.

Other topics that might be covered include a consultation with another specialist, arranging a meeting with a teacher or doing some exercises/homework between appointments.

Preparing a plan

After your first appointment, your specialist will work on a tailored treatment plan. This is likely to involve a combination of in-person or on-line visits as well as activities and exercises to work on at home.

You'll be able to talk through the plan with your specialist so you can understand how each step will help you, or your child, (or both!) feel more empowered and confident about treatment outcomes.



A fully integrated approach

At EDUCARE, we help meet your needs by working closely with referring medical practitioners, health professionals and educators. We can also consult with each other to provide a multi-faceted approach to enhance your wellbeing.



Personal, friendly service

It is our goal to achieve positive outcomes for each individual and family with whom we work. This is why we create personalised treatment plans and provide a range of services all in one place.

We hope that you think of us as your partners in unlocking potential. Our practitioners are truly concerned about delivering outcomes which benefit individuals and families. We aim to make you feel comfortable, cared for and supported every time you visit.

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*Book an appointment at EDUCARE to **EXPERIENCE GENUINE CARE FROM A HIGHLY SKILLED medical, health or educational specialist.** Call us on 02 4943 4444 or visit our website at www.educare.net.au.*

Clearly SPEAKING

How speech therapy can help children and teens master communication and improve learning and self-confidence.



As speech pathologists, a question we're often asked is, "How can speech therapy help my child and what can I do at home to help?". Speech therapy has evolved significantly over the years and while there's still much to learn, speech-language therapists now have a significant understanding of the most common speech and language disorders in children.

Moreover, developments in research have provided improved techniques and technological tools available to help bring about positive change in children with speech difficulties, and in turn, great relief to their parents.



Why speech therapy is important for kids

For boys particularly, untreated speech and communication disorders have been linked to juvenile delinquency and social issues like isolation, along with psychological and mental health issues.

Children affected by developmental speech disorders are at considerable risk of learning disabilities and social problems, which can lead to issues later in life in regards to functioning and mental well-being, including anxiety and depression.

Similarly, a 2018 UK study by the NHS found that children with a mental health condition were five times more likely to have a speech or communication disorder, highlighting the need for innovative speech therapy for children.

On a much brighter note, this also illustrates how effective modern speech therapy for kids has become and the important longitudinal outcomes it can deliver for kids with speech and language disorders.



*EDUCARE's highly-trained and qualified speech pathologists **PROVIDE TARGETED THERAPY TO HELP CHILDREN AND TEENS** of all ages improve their speech and communication skills, including language and literacy.*

Understanding your child's needs

The first step in a speech therapy plan is a one-on-one assessment in which the speech pathologist assesses the child's speech and language skills to identify whether a speech disorder exists. Once they've identified the type of disorder, they can then determine the best way to treat it.

Speech therapists will use different activities and exercises to help your child master skills of communication, depending on your child's specific disorder as well as factors such as age, social skills and individual needs. The speech and language disorders that speech pathologists treat with include:

- Articulation disorders
- Cognitive-communication disorders
- Expressive disorders
- Fluency disorders
- Receptive disorders
- Resonance disorders



Effective tools to help you and your kids at home

While smartphone and computer apps should never be a replacement for face to face speech-language therapy, with the improvements in technology and in the wake of COVID 19, we are required and able to access a range of apps available to use in the home to improve children's speaking abilities.

These programs are proving highly effective at helping children with a variety of speech and language disorders. Kids really enjoy using them which facilitates the learning process. Importantly, they are easily accessible (check out the Play and App Store), affordable and great for time-poor parents.

For a helpful list of speech therapy-related apps, get in touch with your Educare Therapist or book an appointment today.

Is Your Child **READY** *for School?*

EDUCARE's Occupational Therapists share some of the key things to look out for when it comes to school readiness.

If your child meets the age requirements for school, you may be wondering if you are both ready for this important change.

School readiness is about having the preliminary skills required to feel confident and happy at 'big school'. Starting a basic school readiness program the year before can ensure a smooth transition for all, and equip your child to learn and participate well within the school environment.

Our Occupational Therapists recommend preparing children at least six months prior to starting school. The following is a list of skills most children are expected to have when they enter kindergarten:



Gross motor skills

- Catch and throw a ball
- Kick a ball
- Balance on one leg for 10 seconds
- Walk up and down stairs on their own
- Jump with two feet off the ground

Fine motor skills

- Have a dominant hand for writing
- Be able to hold a pencil correctly
- Prewriting—be able to copy basic shapes e.g. circles, squares, crosses etc.
- Recognise and trace their own name
- Colouring in between the lines
- Drawing simple pictures
- Manipulate objects with two hands e.g. threading, play dough
- Be able to manipulate scissors and cut along the line or simple shapes e.g. square, triangle, circle
- Stacking blocks
- Complete 6-8 piece puzzles



Self-care skills

- Wash their hands
- Independent toileting
- Opening their lunch box or food packages
- Understanding a daily routine
- Put on or remove shoes and socks
- Put on or take off a jumper
- Weaning off nap time, ready for a full day of school



Pretend play skills

This involves children storytelling and generating ideas for a play context, including:

- Play with a group of friends
- Pretend to be someone else e.g. fire & rescue, cook, doctor or mechanic
- Pretend other objects are something else e.g. banana is a phone

Behaviour/social skills

- Introduce self to others
- Initiate play with a peer
- Waiting, sharing and taking turns
- Communicate their wants and needs
- Cope with changes in routine
- Follow simple verbal instructions
- Cope with separation from parents



Learning

- Recognise and name simple colours and shapes
- Concentrate and sit at a table for up to 20 minutes at a time

It is recommended your child complete a vision screening assessment prior to attending school. This is often completed in preschool, but you can arrange one yourself through an Optometrist or Behavioural Optometrist.

Navigating Life ON THE SPECTRUM

EDUCARE offers specialist services to support children and teenagers experiencing Autism Spectrum Disorder.



The wide range of symptoms and behaviours once known as Asperger's or Autism are now commonly referred to as 'Autism Spectrum Disorder', or ASD. This condition affects how a person thinks, feels, interacts with others and experiences their environment.

Some people with ASD might find tasks of daily living more challenging than others who are considered 'normal' or 'neurotypical' but can still perform

most activities required to live a meaningful life. Others may require significant support so they can look after themselves and feel well supported and safe in their surroundings.

The experience of ASD is different for each individual and their families. For a diagnosis, you or your child are asked a series of questions and to complete a series of tasks.

While there are a number misunderstandings about ASD, it is far more recognised and accepted than it

used to be. While personal experience differs, with the right support many people on the Spectrum are able to live independently, enjoy good quality life and relationships as well as careers.

At EDUCARE, we support many ASD children and their families with an integrated approach and a specialised program. Our main focus is on preparing your child for everyday life, as well as planning for a successful transition to school and appropriate learning environment.



Our Program

The objective of EDUCARE's Early Intervention Program is to focus on developing social play skills and functional communication for children who experience ASD.

This program has a strong, family-centred approach and all goals and plans are developed by EDUCARE clinicians in partnership with families.

By embracing collaboration, a consistent approach is developed to address behaviour, language, social and literacy skills development and improve overall outcomes for your child.

As an approved diagnostic centre for Autism Spectrum Disorders, EDUCARE services are delivered by a range of in-house specialists. You and your family can expect support from a team that includes:

- Clinical, Educational and Child Psychologists
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Occupational & Behavioural Therapists
- Consultant Psychiatrists



Our objectives

The individual outcomes at EDUCARE will differ depending on personal circumstances.

Common objectives include the following:

- Developing self-regulation skills
- Developing social skills
- Fostering emotional wellbeing
- Developing gross and fine motor skills
- Developing communication and language skills
- Establishing foundational skills for learning
- Fostering play and imitating skills
- Advancing daily living skills
- Generalising skills across environments
- Preparing for school transition

Your regular sessions include reviews and assessing outcomes, so you can look back at what you have achieved together as a team and look forward to what comes next.

Friendly, Empathetic Specialists

A number of our clinicians specialise in ASD and have a particular interest in helping ASD children and their families live a happier, more stable family life. We understand the challenges families face with an ASD diagnosis and aim to provide personal and caring support.

EDUCARE is on your side and aims to work closely with you to devise a support program that meets your needs, so you and your child feel comfortable at every appointment.



Accessing ASD support from EDUCARE

EDUCARE clinicians will help you to apply for the National Disability (NDIS) funding. Unfortunately, all children with special needs do not automatically qualify. However, your clinicians at EDUCARE are experienced in identifying various funding options to maximise the support needed by children, teens and adult clients.

Managing Challenging Behaviour & **OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANCE**

'ODD' children and teens have difficulty responding to authority and can find school life very difficult as a result. Behavioural Intervention can be key to success!

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a childhood behavioural condition characterised by hostility, resistance and defiance toward peers, parents, teachers, and other authority figures.

Approximately one in ten children below the age of twelve years are believed to have ODD, and boys outnumber girls by two to one.

ODD belongs to a class of behavioural problems known as disruptive behaviour disorders, which include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder (CD).

Children with ODD who do not receive treatment can continue to be antisocial and resistive to authority as adults. This can adversely affect their career prospects, relationships, and overall quality of life. Early intervention of ODD is crucial to avoid ongoing harmful effects through young adulthood.

Symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Symptoms of ODD can be seen in younger children, although the diagnosis is not usually made until primary school years. A child who is affected by ODD may display some of the following symptoms:

- Low frustration threshold
- Being easily irritated or angered
- Blaming others for their bad behaviour or accidents
- Recurrent temper tantrums
- Low self-esteem
- Appears to annoy others on purpose
- Arguing often with adults, especially parents
- Refusing to follow rules





How Is ODD Diagnosed?

ODD can be diagnosed by a paediatrician, child psychologist, or child psychiatrist who specialises in behavioural problems.

The child's behaviour is reviewed with various diagnostic tasks and questionnaires during the session interview and is then analysed against the checklist for ODD according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V-TR).

How Is ODD Treated?

It's important to start treatment for ODD early in order to avoid the development of future problems. Some forms of treatment for ODD include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which teaches children how to communicate, solve problems, manage anger, and control impulses.
- Family therapy to improve communication and interactions within the family.
- Peer group therapy helps develop better interpersonal and social skills.
- Behaviour Support Intervention to provide practical strategies, behaviour modification and positive behaviour change to reduce challenging behaviours and improve outcomes in the home and school environments.

Tips For Managing ODD

Parent management training (PMT) teaches parents to change the way they react to their child's behaviour. This involves giving clearly defined rewards and praise for good behaviour and imposing consequences for bad behaviour.

For example, calmly ask your child to complete a task. If you get no response after a few minutes, remind them about what you had asked them to do and importantly, about the consequences for not doing it. If you have to remind your child a third time, they will have to bear the pre-decided consequences, for example, no screen-time for two hours. The consequence needs to be appropriate and balanced for the misconduct.

Some specific tips and strategies include:

- Don't fall into the trap of being the dictator/controlling parent
- Offer two choices with both desired outcomes
- Avoid head on battles
- Slow the procedure down or walk away
- Catch them being good and immediately affirm them
- Pick your battles
- Have consistent rules and consequences

- Develop a routine
- Remove the audience
- Establish good contact with their teacher and school directors
- Remember, they do care
- Help them 'trust' the world

Teachers, grandparents, carers and other adults who spend time with your child need to consistently use the same approach. If just one of them relaxes the rules, it can undermine the discipline plan. Remember, consistency is key!



*Raising a child who has ODD can make family life difficult but **THERE ARE SOLUTIONS AND YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FACE THE CHALLENGES ALONE.** Reach out to the team at EDUCARE for more information and consider the impact a positive behaviour support plan could make!*

CYBER -Bullying

*When online taunts
become troublesome*

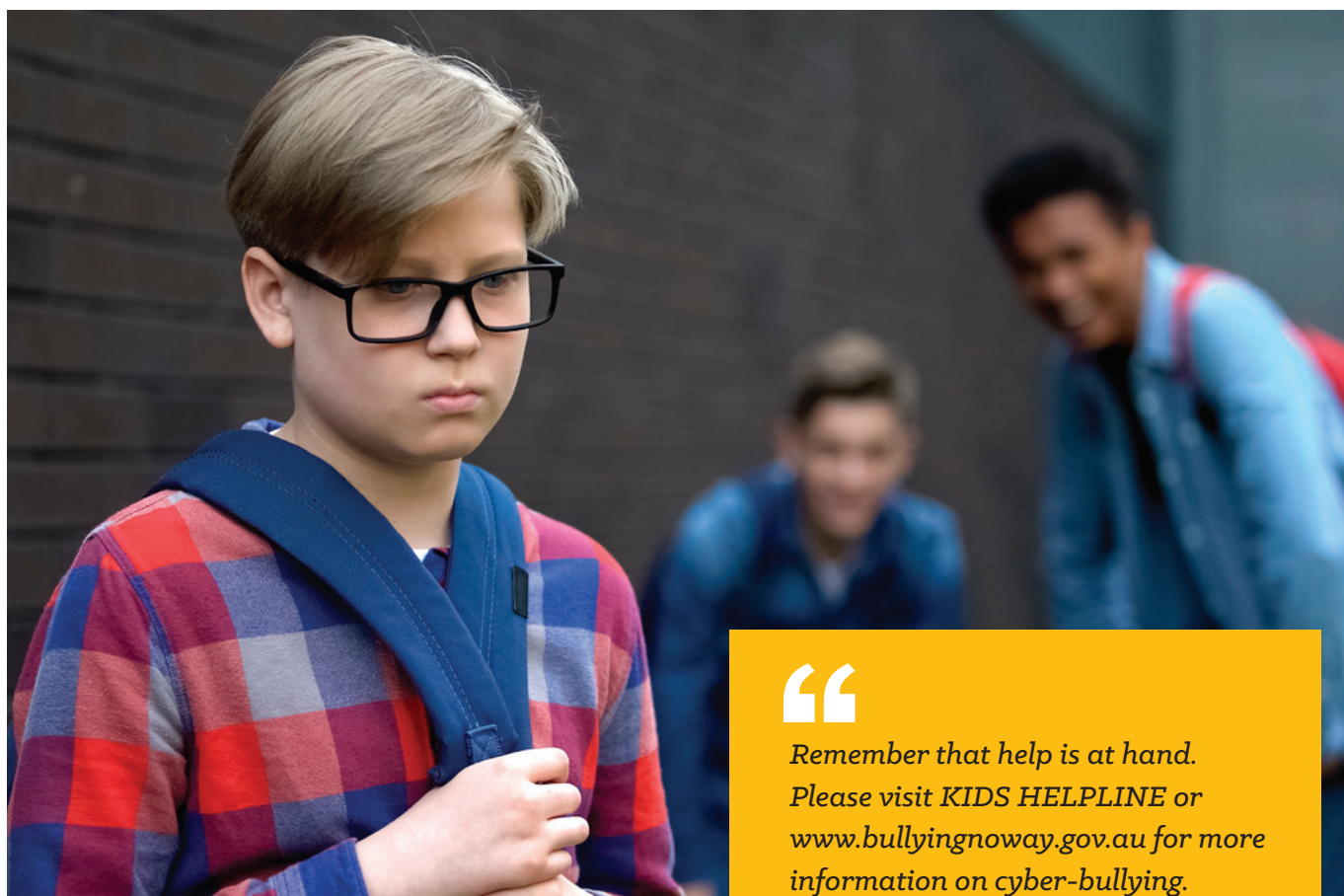
With the expanding use of technology in our everyday lives, our children are spending more time online now than ever before. This increased reliance on devices for everyday social connection and even educational learning can make it hard for your child to escape exposure to cyber-bullying and online harassment.

While conflict within peer groups is considered a normal part of growing up, cyber-bullying is not acceptable. Research has shown there is significant harm associated with being bullied and there are long-lasting effects on the individual being targeted.



Warning signs your child might be experiencing cyber-bullying

- Being upset during or after using the internet or mobile phone
- Becoming secretive about their use or hiding device from others
- Suddenly becoming hesitant or avoidant of online or phone use
- Changes in personality, becoming more withdrawn, anxious, sad or angry
- Unexpected changes in friendship groups or social invites
- A decline in school work
- Changes in sleep patterns/ difficulty sleeping
- Avoiding school, extra-curricular activities or social groups



*Remember that help is at hand.
Please visit **KIDS HELPLINE** or
www.bullyingnoway.gov.au for more
information on cyber-bullying.*

Steps to take if your child is being bullied online

While simply ignoring the bully may be the easiest solution, often this isn't enough. Importantly, children need to know they are not at fault, they are supported, loved and safe.

1. Prepare your family for the digital world

Talk about bullying behaviour at home to make it easier for your family to identify, respond to and ask for help. This provides an opportunity to raise their awareness of online safety, build 'digital intelligence' and develop their social and emotional skills relating to problem-solving.

2. Praise them for sharing & provide reassurance

Children are often scared to tell a parent about bullying behaviour, so listen calmly and reassure them they aren't to blame.

3. Do not respond to the bullying

Starting an online battle isn't sensible

and can escalate the problem. Instead, brainstorm sensible strategies to handle the bullying.

4. Inform your child's school

Most schools have anti-bullying policies and action plans to handle these very situations and provide you with ongoing support.

5. Help them to block and delete the bully

Report the bullying behaviour via 'Report Abuse' tools within social media apps. Support your child to change numbers and accounts to prevent the bully from repeating their behaviour.

6. Learn to protect yourself online

Use privacy settings, parental controls or specially developed apps to help keep your family safe. Be sure to save and store the content of bullying by keeping records or taking screen-shots.

7. Support your child to have time without technology

Encourage them to feel connected, safe and confident in activities that take place offline. Take initiative of creating opportunities for offline activities, particularly those in the outdoors. Such activities provide significant opportunities for family interaction and engagement.

This will enable you to build bonds of trust and a quality relationship that opens up the channels of communication that are important when a child is encountering difficulties in other areas of their life such as cyber-bullying.

If you have concerns about your child's exposure to cyber-bullying, contact Educare for support.

PARENTING *for* SUCCESS

Top tips for raising happy and resilient children

One of the ultimate aims of parenthood is the desire for our children to successfully combat the stress that life can throw their way. This concept is what psychologists refer to as resilience.

What is resilience and why is it important?

Resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to challenging situations. Simply put, it's our kids' ability to 'bounce back' and create opportunities out of unfamiliar or tough times.

The stressful experiences our children face include things as simple as sharing toys or abiding by rules. As they grow, challenges extend to increasing playground conflicts and then to more serious situations like changing schools, a loss in the family or bullying.

Setting the foundations for resilience early on is fundamental in ensuring children's emotional well-being into the future.

Key characteristics of resilient children:

A resilient child is one who has:

- Strong feelings of self-esteem and confidence
- Problem-solving skills, especially when

faced with interpersonal conflict

- The ability to identify and describe their feelings openly

Ways to nurture resilience

The good news is that parents can play a key role in nurturing resilience in their child. So how do we parent in a way that supports them to not only survive but thrive in times of stress?

1. Spend quality time with your children to enhance feelings of connection

Research shows children of loving and attentive parents who consistently demonstrate care and positive attitudes grow up more resilient and are better at regulating their emotions.

2. Open up

When parents talk honestly about their feelings, children learn the importance of sharing their own worries and understanding that experiencing a range of emotions is normal.

3. Admit to your own mistakes

It is also important to own up to your mistakes or admit when you

might have been wrong. This type of acknowledgement allows children to learn that nobody is perfect.

4. Help from a distance

Rather than racing in to prevent all your child's woes, step back and let them figure it out for themselves. While it might feel counterintuitive to expose them to difficult or (appropriately) risky situations, children need to be met with challenges in order to develop self-reliance and test out their problem-solving skills.

5. Let them learn from their mistakes

Similarly, rather than rushing in to pick up the pieces, allow children to experience failure and disappointment. Maybe brainstorm how they might solve a problem. It sounds harsh, but support them through this by offering praise for their efforts and encouragement to try again.

6. It's what's on the inside that counts

Healthy kids are happy kids! Adequate sleep, nutrition and physical movement are also essential to promoting self-care.

“

IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR FAMILY COULD BENEFIT FROM SOME EXTRA HELP TO EQUIP YOUR KIDS WITH THE SKILLS TO HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED, GIVE US A CALL TO DISCUSS HOW WE CAN HELP.



TECH-Obsessed?

Technology has certainly made life easier, but do you or your children find devices difficult to put down?

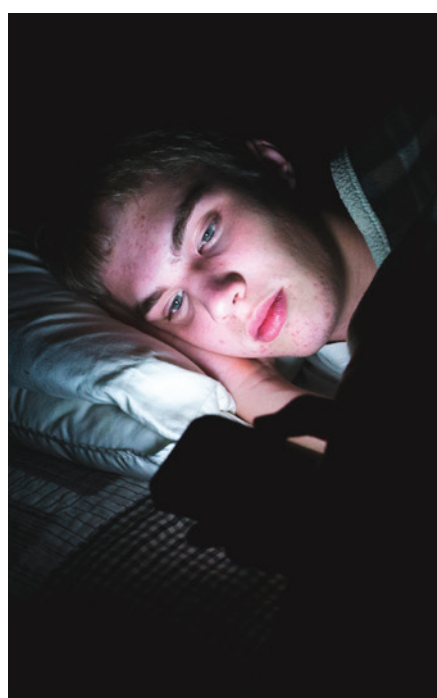
Could you be an addict even while holding down a job and raising a family?

Instead of drugs or alcohol, we're talking about digital devices and technology, or the ever-present screen-time. The rapid rise of these gadgets, while helpful in many wonderful ways, is causing a lot of problems across everyday households.

What exactly is technology addiction?

Technology addiction is an umbrella term that includes a range of addictive behaviours from using social media too often, excessive texting, to excessive online shopping, porn or gaming activities.

An addiction to technology is often difficult to recognise as so many of us rely on technology daily for work, school and staying connected with friends and family. In addition to being under the radar, it's also often very difficult to admit your tech habit is harmful. This is why it's important to understand the basics of the disorder and some of the telltale signs.



1. Excessive or inappropriate use

Examples include scrolling through social media or playing online games as soon as you wake up or engaging with technology as a way of procrastinating or avoiding conflict or responsibilities. People around you might complain about your inappropriate technology habits such as reprimanding you for using it at mealtimes or in the workplace.

2. Cravings

When someone is addicted to technology and devices, they can often feel anxious, fidgety or isolated when they don't have access. For example, they might feel panicky and suffer withdrawals if they can't open social media due to poor phone reception.

To make matters worse, bright screens,

mental stimulation and instant gratification are synonymous with screen-based technology use, particularly gaming and social media. All lead to increased feelings of distress and cravings when devices are not in reach.

3. Multi screening

Choosing to multitask with different technology devices at the one time can be a sign of screen addiction. Some examples include browsing the internet while watching TV or compulsively checking your phone and scrolling through social media feeds while watching a movie. This can lead to a difficulty in focusing on one task, which can lead to issues in workplaces, learning environments and general socialising with friends and family.

4. Experiencing a 'high'

Video games, internet use and time spent on social media all naturally tend to involve a high level of immediate gratification, and positive reinforcement to continue the behaviour. For example, when completing a difficult level in a game or receiving a lot of 'likes' on a posted photo. It's very easy to become addicted to this type of gratification because it's so readily accessible and often requires very little output.

The problem lies in the continued search for this positive reinforcement and gratification. Tolerance builds and you can easily wind up trapped in a cycle of 'tech high' seeking, which in turn leads to increasingly higher levels of usage.

5. Losing track of time

Completely losing track of time is a key indicator of technology addiction.

People are often so engrossed in their smartphone or PC, suddenly realising that hours have passed and that it's 3 am. Some addicts can even fail to notice they are hungry, thirsty or need a bathroom break.

6. Guilt and defensiveness

Feeling guilty or defensive about the way you use technology can also be a sign of addiction. This may be tied to family members or friends telling you to stop using your device so much. At other times it may be because your technology addiction has impacted on your ability to study or work effectively (i.e. procrastination, missing deadlines).

It can lead to behaviour like concealing, hiding or lying about just how much you use your device, or minimising the negative impact it has on your ability to achieve goals and function in your everyday life.

What you can do about technology addiction

If some of these symptoms sound familiar, then help is available.

The first step is accepting that there may be an issue and then taking the steps to resolve it. For example, making the effort to set aside specific time for non-tech based activities, like Outdoor Adventures.

Technology addiction might be tied to underlying issues such as anxiety or depression. It may be helpful to discuss this further with a Psychologist.



At EDUCARE, WE CAN HELP CHILDREN, TEENS AND ADULTS ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION. *Make a booking online or contact us for more information about our adult and child psychology services.*

Catching those **ZZZ'S**

The importance of sleep when it comes to memory, learning and wellbeing

Many parents and individuals come to us for a range of behavioural, learning or mood concerns. Sometimes the simplest answer lies in bed... meaning that a little more sleep, or the right kind of sleep, can make a world of difference.



How Sleep Deprivation Impacts Learning

Sleep plays a crucial role in our thinking and learning. Not getting the right amount impacts these cognitive processes in a variety of ways.

During sleep, your brain is busy processing information from the day and forming memories while your body rests. Without adequate sleep, your brain becomes foggy and everything from your attention span to your reasoning and problem-solving skills are affected. This makes it significantly more difficult to learn new things and remember those already learned.

Importance Of Sleep For Memory

Research consistently shows sleep plays an essential role in learning and memory in two key ways – the ability to focus and learn efficiently; and the ability to consolidate a memory so it can be recalled in future, (i.e. make something stick). To create a memory, three important processes have to occur:

- Acquisition – learning or experiencing a new thing.
- Consolidation – storing the memory in the brain.
- Recall – having the ability to access that memory in the future.

There are many different types of memories. Some are autobiographical and episodic, based on events in your life. Others are fact-based, such as remembering the name of a place; or instructional like remembering how to play an instrument or tie your shoelace.

Regardless of the type of memory, sleep is absolutely crucial for its consolidation. Without enough sleep, your brain struggles to absorb and recall new information when needed.



How Poor Sleep Impairs Performance

Getting just two hours less sleep than you need can have a host of effects on your mental performance, including:

- Reduced alertness
- Shortened attention span
- Slower reaction time
- Poor judgement
- Reduced work efficiency
- Loss of motivation
- Poor decision-making skills
- Reduced concentration
- Poor memory
- Reduced awareness of the environment and situation
- Increased likelihood of mentally 'stalling' or fixating on one thought
- Errors of omission – making a mistake by forgetting to do something
- Making a mistake by forgetting to do something or choosing the wrong option

If you or your child are experiencing any of the above, it may be time to get some more rest!



How To Get More Sleep

One of the most important ways to improve sleep is to reduce stimulation at bedtime, and make the resolution to get to bed earlier. This means switching off devices and screens, spending time relaxing and establishing a sleep-time routine. Both children and adults can benefit from practising meditation and listening to calming music.

If falling asleep or staying asleep has become a problem, you may benefit from the intervention of a professional, who can help. Identify the cause of sleep loss and work with you towards a solution.

How Much Sleep Is Enough?

Sleep requirements differ for each person, depending on their age, physical activity levels, general health and other individual factors. We tend to need less sleep as we grow older. According to research, the amount of sleep generally required is as follows:

- Age 6-13: 9-11hrs
- Age 14-17: 8-10hrs
- Age 18-25: 7-9hrs
- Age 26-64: 7-9hrs

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

A lack of sleep can occasionally be tied to underlying issues such as anxiety, life stress or depression. At EDUCARE, we can help children, teens and adults in uncovering and addressing this issue. .

This **ADULTING** *Business is hard!*

Support your teen as they navigate the transition to young adulthood

The transition from teenager to young adult can be a scary time. Suddenly your adolescent is no longer the big fish in their little pond, but a fresh young adult thrust into a grown-up world. While this phase brings about excitement and opportunity, navigating new responsibilities and important decisions may feel daunting. It can also feel difficult as a parent to know when to intervene and when to let your child tackle challenges on their own.



Why is this transition so tough?

Typically, the changes associated with any life transition bring instability. Teens are making major adjustments, learning new skills and coping with brand new situations. The predominant message from the mainstream world is they can achieve whatever they want to achieve, however we know just how tough it can be for a teenager during this time.

Why it's important for parents to help

A successful transition into young adulthood forms the foundation for your teen in further stages of life development, including navigating their career, significant relationships and even becoming a parent.

The Institute of Medicine and National Research Council suggests that parental support plays a pivotal role in ensuring teens make this transition successfully.

The challenge for parents is to provide guidance without hindering the development of independence and self-determination.

What skills do teens need in order to succeed?

As they transition to young adulthood, teens need to have a well-developed sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. These skills enable them to manage a variety of complex relationships and decisions across settings including education, employment, within new social circles and of course amongst their family.

When should you start preparing

Parents are increasingly expected to provide the knowledge and resources to enable their teenagers to become self-reliant and fully-functioning young adults. The key is to **START EARLY!**

Research suggests that parenting which places importance on cultivating

responsibility and self-empowerment in children from an early age is important for success in adulthood. If it feels like your teen is already one foot out the door to adulthood, here are some suggestions to guide you through the challenges of this transition.

1. Tune into their emotional needs

Expect your teen to have a lot of feelings during this time. Let them express themselves without too much curtailing and empathise with them. Try to not make judgements, even if you don't always approve of their behaviour/attitude.

2. Maintain boundaries

Be consistent in your parenting. Rules and boundaries build trust, as well as providing a framework for your teen to explore their independence and learn about consequences.

3. Preserve routines

Family routines provide familiarity and predictability, which can offer comfort and reassurance during the uncertain times of adolescence.



4. Offer choice

Just like maintaining a routine provides a sense of comfort to teens, offering choices wherever possible helps them establish a sense of control, which is often lacking during times of developmental change.

Foster your teens self-confidence by encouraging age-appropriate autonomy to make decisions about their life.

5. Promote discussion

Encourage your child to explore new ideas and ways of doing things as well as participate in family problem-solving. During these conversations, listen without judgement (whether you agree or not) and offer your thoughts as simply as possible.

Teach your teen that care and mutual respect can co-exist despite differing points of view. These processes are essential for establishing their own identity and independent thought.

6. Practice self-care

Many teens begin to push boundaries around healthy home habits (e.g bedtimes, food choices). However, practising good self-care including nutritious meals, quality sleep and stress management will help them, and yourself, stay strong for the path ahead.

This is a tough time for parents too!

Supporting your teen through this transition also involves your ability to 'relinquish', or let go as they approach their young adult years.

It's important to separate your anxiety about this journey from theirs and avoid projecting your own worries onto them. Remember, your teenager's brain continues to develop well into their twenties. The parts responsible for decision making, predicting consequences and impulse control are still maturing! Providing them with the

flexibility to fail and learn from their mistakes, and supporting them at a safe distance through struggles will ensure they're prepared for their new venture as 'masters of the universe'.

Approaching adulthood is a whole new world. It's stressful and anxiety-provoking but it's also filled with endless possibility.

At EDUCARE, we understand this transitional period can be a tough time for the whole family. Reach out to one of our professionals, who can help guide you and your teen through some of the challenges.

Overcoming **WORRY+** **ANXIETY**

What is normal for children, teens and adults when it comes to feeling concerned about day to day life and when does it make sense to seek help?



Worry and anxiety are normal emotions that we all experience from time to time. For example, it's normal to feel anxious when put in a scary or potentially dangerous situation or when things change rapidly as they did during the COVID-19 outbreak.

At different times in our life, we may experience greater amounts of worry or anxiety, which is considered perfectly normal, such as when we have our first job interview or undergo a medical or dental procedure. Feeling worried and anxious is unpleasant. If we were to do away with these feelings, we might find ourselves taking bigger risks and acting without regard for our safety. So they do have an important role to play in our safety and decision making.

When are feelings of worry and anxiety a problem?

It's crucial for us all to learn the difference between everyday worries and helpful anxiety to that of abnormal anxiety and pervasive worry. Once we can identify that a problem exists, we can decide to do something about it!

Worry and anxiety are considered abnormal when:

- it becomes excessive or chronic
- you can no longer do things you once did due to the worry or anxiety.

Abnormal worry or anxiety could indicate that you have an anxiety disorder. A person with an anxiety disorder will feel distressed a lot of the time, even if there appears to be no obvious reason. It often prevents them from being themselves, enjoying their day to day life, planning their future and shying away from outings or activities with friends.

Types of anxiety disorders

Anxiety disorders come in various forms and you might even experience more than one at the same time. Symptoms of depression are also common, as are increased problems with alcohol or drugs. Types of anxiety disorders include:

- Panic attacks



- Generalised anxiety
- Social anxiety
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Phobias

At EDUCARE, many of our clients have lived with excessive worry and anxiety for so long that they find it difficult to differentiate themselves from their anxiety disorder. In these cases, it can be incredibly helpful to learn how anxiety disorders work, and to know that their anxiety or excessive worry is not helpful. Learning to understand how anxiety can be managed is a powerful feeling!

Treating anxiety

If you believe you are experiencing abnormal levels of anxiety, you should visit your doctor to ensure your anxiety is not due to another underlying condition. Your GP can then talk you through the best treatment options for you. Psychological therapy is often recommended and the best course of action for most anxiety disorders.

There are various types of psychological therapies effective for treating anxiety disorders. When you meet with the Psychologist, you can expect to discuss the different treatments that will be most beneficial for conquering your type of anxiety.

Commonly used psychological treatments to address anxiety include Cognitive

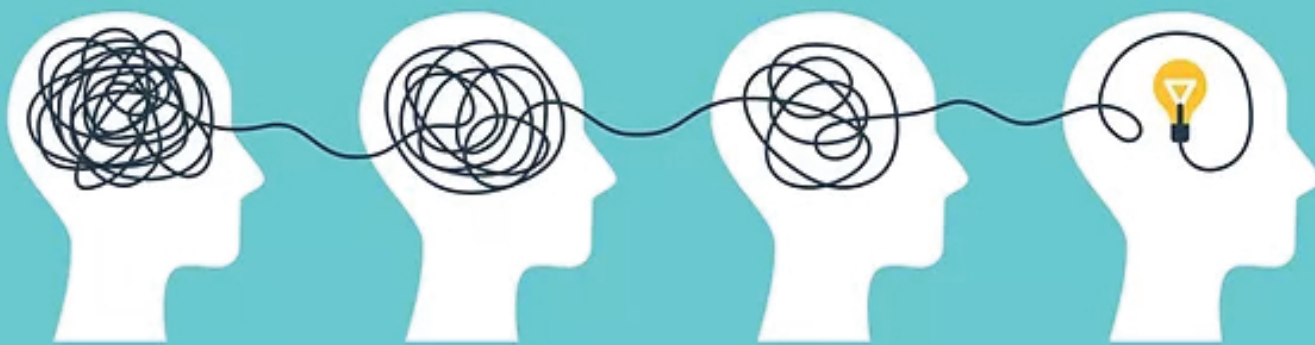
Behaviour Therapy, Exposure and Response Prevention Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Therapy.

Supporting a child or teen with an anxiety disorder

It is also important to know that anxiety disorders can look and feel different for children and teens. While you may have your own successful strategies for managing your anxiety, it can be beneficial to see a psychologist to learn how to support a child experiencing these problems.

Two key skills that are important for anxiety management and building resilience include teaching your child about relaxation and how to problem-solve. For further help, please contact your GP for a referral.

GET HELP TODAY
AT EDUCARE, we often work with children and adults to help manage anxiety so they can stop it interfering with their lives.



WHAT IS EMDR?

Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a psychotherapy designed to ease the symptoms and emotional distress associated with traumatic life experiences. EMDR has a substantial evidence base proving it to be highly effective for a variety of trauma, including PTSD, single-incident and complex trauma.

Understanding the impact of trauma

EMDR is based on the idea that a person's emotional well-being is entwined with their physical state. During trauma, the brain's ability to process and store memories is interfered with – which can result in memories feeling as if they are still occurring in the present day (commonly known as “being triggered”). These triggering events can lead to the same reaction to when the original trauma occurred. For example, someone ferociously attacked by a dog, may be frightened by every dog they encounter, or simply by walking past the spot the original attack occurred.

Shifting painful memories

EMDR uses tones, taps and of course eye-movements, to shift an incorrectly stored memory to a different part of the brain and as a result, removes the associated painful emotion and distress attached to it. Correcting this storage error allows one to react in the present without the painful memories of the past interfering. This process can also help shift maladaptive beliefs into more helpful ways of thinking about oneself, leading to greater psychological coping. For example, replacing the negative belief “I am worthless” to “I am okay as I am.” EMDR aims to improve positive cognitions around the trauma in order to gain better control over it and the associated emotions.



A successful treatment for all ages

The model of EMDR therapy is composed of 8 phases and requires clinicians to undertake extensive training. Clients engaging in therapy are asked to hold in mind the different aspects of the event while tracking the therapist's fingers across their visual field. This has been likened to what happens during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. Researchers suggest that whilst doing this exercise, the individual begins to process the memory and the disturbing feelings associated with it. In successful EMDR, clients conclude therapy feeling empowered by the very experiences that once disturbed them. Their wounds have not just closed, they have transformed – all without needing to speak in detail or “homework tasks” outside of therapy. EMDR has been successfully used across a range of ages and types of trauma, and thus can be an effective treatment for most individuals, including children and teens.



Here at EDUCARE we have experienced clinicians trained in EMDR therapy. Contact us today to explore how this evidence based treatment could work for you or your family members.

Frequently Asked QUESTIONS

These are the questions our clients commonly ask before they visit EDUCARE

Which specialist is right for me or my child?

The specialist you see will depend on your needs and that of your family. Your GP or family member may have recommended a clinician. Alternatively, we can help you decide which specialist is right for you when we first speak on the phone.

Depending on your needs, your treatment may expand to include more than one specialist at EDUCARE. Thankfully we have a team of experts equipped to support varying needs of children, teens and adults across life's challenges.

How do I pay for my appointment?

Our administration staff will request payment at the end of your appointment. You may be able to use your private health fund or access Medicare for a partial payment. Alternatively, your visit may be covered by the NDIS.

What is the NDIS?

The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Legislated in 2013, the NDIS is a way to help people under 65 with a permanent and significant disability get the care and support they need. It's a publicly funded program, and it is not means-tested.

Your clinician will be able to advise you whether you or your child may qualify for the NDIS Funding. They will also help you with the application process including providing you with the necessary reports.

Can I visit EDUCARE and have payments covered by the NDIS?

EDUCARE is a registered and accredited provider of NDIS services. Your appointments will be covered by NDIS if you have an NDIS Agreement Plan

in place. The NDIS Coordinator at EDUCARE can provide you with advice and guidance in seeking assistance under the NDIS Program.

Can I make appointments after hours?

EDUCARE is open from 8:00am to 6:00pm M-W & F; and 8:00am to 8pm Thursdays. Our team at EDUCARE are always working with flexibility in mind and we recommend you call our reception staff and discuss the options available.

Where is your clinic located?

Our clinic is located at SKY CENTRAL West, Level 3, 28 Smart Street, Charlestown, NSW 2290.

Is my specialist available every weekday?

Some of our specialists work part-time with EDUCARE. Please contact reception to book your appointment based on their availability.

How many appointments will I have at EDUCARE?

This depends completely on your needs. Some children come to EDUCARE for several years to work on their development skills while others find they benefit from 6-10 appointments. The need for ongoing or extended treatment will be reviewed with you throughout your consultations.

Can I attend my child's appointment?

It is essential for parents to attend the sessions at least initially. Your clinician will discuss with you whether it is better for you to sit in the follow-up therapy sessions.

How does telehealth with EDUCARE work?

EDUCARE provides telehealth support for families as may be required. The consultation is delivered via video conference and is very easy to facilitate to accommodate your circumstances. Telehealth and In-Clinic services are often used in combination and we are mindful of providing the most effective form of treatment delivery that meets consumer and clinic needs.

The Telehealth Service allows clients to access services in a very convenient and time-efficient manner in the comfort of their home. This is particularly helpful to clients who are unable to attend in person.

Services include support for children, teens and parents; and importantly, services are covered by Medicare, NDIS and private health funds.



EDUCARE provides a comprehensive range of assessments, diagnostic and treatment services.

We take a fully integrated approach to meet our clients' needs by working closely with referring medical practitioners, health professionals and educators.





Unlocking **POTENTIAL** *Enhancing* **WELLBEING**



We help children, teens and families
by providing specialist medical,
health and education services.

Book your appointment today.
Phone 02 4943 4444 or visit our
website at www.educare.net.au.

