



Media Release

May 28 2014

Free online program proven to help children with anxiety

A free, evidence-based program that has been proven to help prevent and treat anxiety in young people aged between eight and 17 is now available online.

The BRAVE program, which has been trialled and evaluated over the last 13 years, is an online self-help course that allows young people and their parents to seek support for anxiety in the comfort of their own homes.

The program, which uses Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) techniques, includes up to 10 sessions for children or young people. Parents can also take part in a separate program to learn ways to help their children manage anxiety and participants can come back at any time for refreshers.

Parents can complete the program together with, or independently of, their child and not everyone will need to do all sessions.

The program was developed by the BRAVE team* from Griffith University, The University of Southern Queensland and The University of Queensland, in consultation with UniQuest Pty Limited, and **USQ Researcher Dr Sonja March** said the program is easy to use.

“The program is fun, interactive and can be completed at your own pace. All that young people with anxiety need to access the treatment program is a computer and the internet,” she said.

“Trials and evaluation of the BRAVE program have shown young people who use it notice a significant improvement in their anxiety, and many are able to overcome their worries.”

beyondblue CEO Georgie Harman said *beyondblue* is proud to have supported the BRAVE team by providing more than \$500,000 to fund the conversion of the program from a one-on-one therapist-led program to a self-directed therapy program.

“We think this is a really worthwhile investment because anxiety can make it hard for children and young people to cope with day-to-day life. If left undiagnosed and untreated, anxiety conditions can persist or worsen as children grow into adults. Many anxiety symptoms go unrecognised by adults who come to believe, for example, that panicky feelings and constant worrying are part of their personality.

“Not everyone across Australia has equal access to services, so this will be of great benefit to people living in rural and regional areas, as well families in metro areas,” Ms Harman said.

Parents should be aware that common reasons for anxiety in children or teenagers may include meeting new people, being away from home, performing in front of others, travelling on planes, getting injections or current global events.

Children and young people with anxiety between the ages of eight and 17 (and their parents) are invited to register and use the BRAVE program. For more information, or to access the program, please visit www.brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au or enter via the *beyondblue* website www.beyondblue.org.au.

* The BRAVE Team is comprised of Professor Susan Spence and Dr Caroline Donovan (Griffith University), Dr Sonja March (The University of Southern Queensland), and Professor Justin Kenardy (The University of Queensland).



Contact *beyondblue*:

Marnie Banger (03) 9818 9219, 0431 228 243

Contact University of Queensland:

Gemma Bettens (07) 3470 4354

beyondblue

PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122

beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636

www.beyondblue.org.au