

OnTrac: An Online CBT Based Program for Tweens (11–13) with ADHD

Introduction

The transition into adolescence can be challenging for any child, but for tweens with ADHD, these years often present heightened difficulties. As academic pressures intensify and social dynamics become more complex, ADHD-related challenges such as inattention, impulsivity, hyperactivity, and executive functioning deficits can feel overwhelming. Recognising the critical need for timely and accessible support, **OnTrac** offers a solution: a structured, evidence-based program delivered **online via video conferencing**, allowing families to access this vital resource from the comfort of their homes.

Developed by SafeZone Counselling in collaboration with ADHD WA, this program is specifically designed to empower tweens with ADHD by building their knowledge, resilience, and practical skills to manage their condition effectively.

Program Aims

The **OnTrac** program aims to:

1. Enhance understanding of ADHD and its impact on daily life.
2. Equip tweens with strategies to manage academic, social, and emotional challenges.
3. Build essential coping and executive functioning skills.
4. Foster independence while maintaining appropriate parental support.
5. Provide a convenient, flexible, and engaging online environment for learning and growth.

Why Choose OnTrac?

ADHD symptoms don't disappear as children grow; they evolve, presenting new challenges during adolescence. This program addresses these challenges head-on by:

- Offering flexible access through online sessions, ideal for families in rural or remote areas.
- Combining psychoeducation, cognitive-behavioural strategies, and practical skills to support holistic development.
- Balancing parental involvement with the tweens' need for increased autonomy.

Program Structure

The OnTrac program consists of **three dynamic modules**, each delivered through engaging, interactive **online group sessions** facilitated by a registered psychologist.

OnTrac: An Online CBT Based Program for Tweens (11–13) with ADHD

Module 1: Understanding ADHD (Psychoeducation)

This module lays the foundation by helping participants and their families develop a comprehensive understanding of ADHD, focusing on:

- **What is ADHD:** Exploring its neurobiological basis and how it affects executive functioning.
- **Common Co-Occurrences:** Recognising related challenges, including anxiety, depression, and learning disorders.
- **ADHD and Emotions:** Understanding emotional dysregulation and its impact on behaviour.
- **Treatment Options:** Medication, therapy, and lifestyle changes.

This module empowers tweens to better understand themselves and normalises their experiences, reducing stigma and fostering self-compassion.

Module 2: Thinking Positively (Adaptive Thinking)

The second module focuses on reshaping thought patterns to promote adaptive and realistic ways of thinking. Key components include:

- The connection between **thoughts, feelings, and behaviours**.
- Strategies to identify and challenge **negative thoughts**.
- Building self-esteem by recognising strengths and celebrating successes.
- **Goal Setting and Values Identification:** Helping tweens align their actions with their values.
- Problem-solving skills to tackle daily challenges confidently.
- Strengthening **family relationships** through better communication and understanding.

By addressing thought patterns, this module helps participants manage the emotional side of ADHD, which can significantly impact behaviour and self-worth.

Module 3: Building Skills for Success (Practical Coping Strategies)

The final module focuses on equipping tweens with actionable tools to manage ADHD-related challenges in their daily lives. Skills covered include:

- **Time Management:** Creating schedules and sticking to them.
- **Organisation and Prioritisation:** Breaking tasks into manageable steps.
- **Managing Distractibility and Procrastination:** Techniques to stay on track.
- **Social Skills:** Navigating peer relationships with confidence.

OnTrac: An Online CBT Based Program for Tweens (11–13) with ADHD

- **Communication Skills:** Expressing needs clearly and effectively.

Through interactive activities and real-life examples, tweens practice these skills in a supportive online group environment, preparing them for greater independence and success in adolescence.

Program Format

- **Eligibility:** Tweens aged 11–13 diagnosed with ADHD.
- **Delivery Mode:** Online via video conferencing for convenience and accessibility.
- **Session Schedule:** Weekly sessions for six weeks, running from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM on Wednesdays during the school term
- **Parent Involvement:** Parents receive weekly updates on session content and assigned home activities. They also complete pre- and post-program questionnaires to monitor progress.
- **Facilitator:** A registered psychologist, program developer and co-author of *What Lies Beneath Matters*, a series of workbooks for ADHD

Accessing the Program

The program is offered under Medicare's Better Access Initiative (Group Therapy, Item 80123). To obtain a rebate, participants require a referral from their GP, paediatrician, or psychiatrist with the specified item number. Feedback will be provided to the referring professional upon program completion.

Why Online Delivery Works

- **Accessibility:** Families from rural or remote areas can now participate without the need for travel.
- **Flexibility:** Busy schedules are accommodated with evening sessions.
- **Engagement:** Interactive online tools and activities keep tweens involved and focused.

Contact Information

For more information or to register, please contact Grace at:

Email: szcounselling@gmail.com or grace@adhdfoundation.org.au