



## 5. Parents Program

### Rationale for OnTrac Parenting Program

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children is a prevalent and challenging condition. Most childhood cases continue to meet the criteria of adolescent ADHD, contrary to the belief that children will grow out of the disorder. Between 50-80% of children diagnosed with ADHD will continue to meet the criteria in adulthood. Typical struggles include:

- Inattention
- Impulsiveness
- Hyperactivity
- Organisation and Planning
- School performance
- Compliance
- Self-regulation
- Relationships
- Socialisation

Parenting is a challenging task at the best of times and parenting a child with ADHD comes with added challenges. Learning to negotiate these challenges is made more difficult by the fact that there are no hard and fast rules, as ADHD can have different presentations and degrees of severity.

Research is increasingly showing that interventions like OnTrac for Tweens and Teens with ADHD are beneficial in the multidisciplinary treatment of ADHD. Tweens and teens can benefit from collaborative interventions, where both parent and child develop strategies to implement in the different settings where challenges are experienced.

For a child with ADHD, consistency is vital. By using a supportive and structured approach, challenging behaviours can be limited, and the child can flourish. This is the rationale underpinning the OnTrac Parenting Program, which was developed in response to demand from parents whose children had completed the OnTrac program and felt they, the parents, would benefit from a parenting program that was aligned with the children's program.

The program is also a self-help tool for those parents whose children refuse to engage in such programs or in one-on-one interventions.

Concepts in the Parenting Program will give parents the tools to assist their growing children to continue developing independence and take responsibility for their condition.



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What we have learned from delivering the children programs since 2018 is that parent involvement is vital for best outcomes. Involvement, however, needs to be age appropriate and programs should be kept separate so that each can focus on their own role and responsibilities in the management of ADHD, but ideally, delivered concurrently.

The OnTrac Parenting Program is a practical, skills-based course, backed with a comprehensive workbook detailing numerous proven strategies. The focus is on the gradual process of moving away from parenting to protect, and towards parenting to prepare. The objectives of the program are:

- to improve parental management skills and competence when dealing with challenging behaviours presented by teens and tweens with ADHD
- to provide education to the parents about ADHD in children, including causes, symptoms, and the many different presentations
- to increase teen and tween compliance with parental requests, directives and rules
- to create a more harmonious family by the development of positive parenting skills such as consistently providing clear guidance and rules, using fair and just discipline, and a reliance on values-guided parenting behaviour
- to use collaborative problem-solving strategies and assertive communication to address conflict
- to identify and alter unreasonable beliefs or expectations in parents or children that may be hindering the development of positive behaviour.

**Eligibility:** The program will be offered to the parents of the children who have completed or are completing the OnTrac program, as well as parents who cannot get their children to engage in such interventions.

**Facilitator:** The facilitator is a psychologist, who offers Medicare Services under the Better Access Initiative.

**Time and venues:** The program delivery follows the four school terms. Venues to be confirmed.

The program is offered under Medicare's Better Access Initiative, namely Group Therapy (item 80120). To obtain the rebate, participants need to provide a Mental Health Plan from their GP stating the item number above.