



SPYKids:

The Development and Evaluation of Single Session Consultation for Parents of Young Kids through Patient Engagement Techniques

OBJECTIVE

To develop an SSI for families of 2- to 5-year-old children who are on waitlists for local services in Manitoba. The program will be developed in partnership with parents with lived experience and service provider through focus groups.

METHODOLOGY

Focus groups were made up of eight parents, who had at least one child between 0 and 12 years old who were currently receiving or on the waitlist for services, and ten service providers. Participants were sent a questionnaire to gather further opinions after each focus group.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

- Parents reported feeling "lost in the system."
- Parents reported difficulty navigating the system and feelings of frustration with the slow pace of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Every parent expressed support for the development of an SSI.
- Service providers thought families would be motivated to attend the SSI to reduce the stress associated with being on a waitlist and due to the appeal of learning new skills that could be used to support family needs.
- Concerns with the SSI included the ability of the clinician to build rapport with the family during one session, the possibility of families feeling overwhelmed by all the information, and accessibility concerns (e.g., for rural families).
- The resulting SPYKids program will be piloted as a solution-focused and strengths-based **90-minute virtual SSI** for families with children with neurodevelopmental disorders.
- The session coach will meet remotely with the caregiver(s) to:
 - Clarify their most urgent needs,
 - Develop an action plan to support those needs,
 - Select key skills and deliver handouts and worksheets to address relevant stressors, and
 - Discuss external referrals and resources.

INTRODUCTION

- **Early intervention** is an important part of supporting children with neurodevelopmental disorders and their families.
- **Long waitlists** mean some families experience significant delays in receiving services and these delays can result in **increased parenting stress**.
- **Single-session interventions** (SSIs) are a support for families waiting for comprehensive services by providing **concrete parenting tools now to manage difficult child behaviours and strategies to reduce parenting stress**.

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CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Some challenges of the focus groups included:
 - Difficulty recruiting a more diverse group of parents and service providers,
 - Ensuring materials were as effective as possible for a single session,
 - Accessibility issues such as avoiding jargon and delivering the session by phone instead of a computer, and
 - The feasibility of creating handouts that were still useful after the session.
- The SPYKids pilot trial will address the identified concerns, work toward improving materials and delivery, and continue the partnership with parent-partners to improve this program.
- SPYKids **aims to provide caregivers with tools that will help manage family stressors while waiting to receive comprehensive services from other organizations**.