



Contacting Us:

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Welcome to Engage Group!

Engage Group is an education and support programme that is both run and designed by qualified people who have lived experiences of overcoming problematic anxiety. This information pack will tell you everything you need to know about Engage Group so you can decide if you want to take part. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us. The Youthline Specialty Assessment Service is your first point of call. You may also like to get whanau or friend support to help you make a decision about taking part.

Youthline are licensed providers of Engage Group, holding a Resource Licence from Engage Aotearoa Ltd to deliver the programme in the Auckland area. Community Mental-Health Resources Trust proudly funds Youthline to deliver Engage Group to individuals in Auckland free of charge.

If you decide to participate in Engage Group you are free to change your mind and withdraw from the programme at any time. However, there are limited places in the programme and we ask that you make every effort to utilise the opportunity to participate.

Who is Engage Group For?

Engage Group is for people over 18 who believe their lives are negatively affected by anxiety. Anxiety might be stopping you from doing or enjoying things that you would like to be able to do and enjoy.

To take part in Engage Group you will need to be at a level of functioning where you are able to operate safely in a group environment, both in terms of your own wellbeing and that of the other participants. If you are unsure about whether you are ready, you might like to talk to your key-worker, doctor, therapist or whanau to help you decide. Finally, to take part in Engage Group you will need to be able to read and write in English. We encourage you to talk to us about any concerns or questions you have.

When and Where Will Engage Take Place?

Sessions will run for two hours, once a week, for ten weeks at Youthline in Ponsonby. Visit www.engagenz.co.nz or contact Youthline for start date information.



What Does Engage Group Involve?

Taking part in Engage Group involves attending 10 weekly group sessions, taking part in an interview about your anxiety experiences and filling out a self-assessment questionnaire 3 times.

Engage Group is not a therapy programme and you will not be asked to discuss your personal history in the group. The focus is on finding practical, useful ways of managing anxiety experiences in the present so you can reduce the negative impact anxiety has on you. Facilitators share evidence-based strategies with the group and provide a safe, supportive space to explore them within. The group is limited to 10 participants. It runs only once a year and places are precious.

Throughout the programme you will be set small, weekly tasks that help you move from a conceptual understanding to putting practical actions into place in your daily life. Sometimes the weekly tasks will be written activities and other times they will be more activity-based.

Before you begin the programme, you will take part in an interview that involves talking about how anxiety affects you. You are allowed to pause the interview at any time and have a support person present if you wish. The results of the interview will be turned into a personalised questionnaire that measures how anxiety is affecting you at any given point in time. We will use the questionnaire as a safety check and progress monitor so we know when you need help and can provide you with regular updates about what seems to be working for you and what might be helpful additions. We will also use the results of the questionnaires to evaluate how effective Engage Group was for the participants, for quality improvement purposes. None of your individual information will be shared in anyway.

The questionnaire will be mailed to you or given to you in person after a group session so you will be able to fill it out in private at home and return it to the facilitators at the start of the next session. You will be asked to fill it out the week before your first session, two weeks in, half-way through and at the very end.

There is no cost to you the individual to take part, other than transporting yourself to the weekly sessions! Engage Group used to cost \$225 or \$25 per week. Thanks to funding from Community Mental-Health Resources Trust, Youthline are now able to offer this programme free of charge.

Programme Structure

Engage Group is made up of a 10-week programme of education and support. Each week you will learn something new and get support with your efforts to put the lesson into practice.

The first five weeks of Engage Group focuses on exploring different strategies for coping and developing your approach to changing the way anxiety is affecting your behaviour.

The second five weeks of Engage Group focuses on exploring a useful framework for understanding anxiety and helps you to identify ways of changing distressing patterns of thinking. In this way, Engage is informed by the CBT approach to anxiety with an emphasis on both behaviour and thinking.

There are 8 Learning Sessions and 2 Experiential Chat Sessions where you have a chance to talk about your experiences with the material and try things out together. Chat sessions provide you with an opportunity for learning by experience and social connection, and help you overcome any barriers you may encounter.

Note: From 2012 this programme is 6 weeks shorter than previous years to make it more accessible. We have reduced the number of chat sessions. Participants will learn all the same material as in previous years.

Benefits, Risks and Safety

Taking part in Engage Group could help you to gain a better understanding of your emotions and anxiety experiences. It could help you to find more ways of coping with anxiety. This may help you to reduce how often and how strongly you experience anxiety. It may also help you to reduce the negative impacts of anxiety.

Some people show a 50 - 75% reduction in their anxiety severity at the end of the programme and 100% of Engage Group participants have reported finding the group useful. Participants have gone on to move to independent living, find jobs, start and finish courses and transform their lives. People who attend all of the sessions, complete all of the homework tasks and allow themselves to be open in the group are more likely to get results when the programme finishes, but there are a lot of things involved in determining what results a person gets.

Most people who take part in Engage Group find that their anxiety severity reduces during the programme. Some people who take part do not experience any change in their anxiety severity as it is measured on their personal questionnaire, but report other benefits. Occasionally, people find that their anxiety periodically gets worse; talking about anxiety can be an emotional and challenging process, that sometimes brings things to the surface. This is true of most personal development processes. If you experience this, it will probably be short-lived, but if you do not seek support for it, there is the potential that these unwanted emotions could last for longer. If you experience this, you will be given support to counteract it. Your personal questionnaire will help us keep track and know when you might be needing extra help. In this way, everyone who has experienced an increase in their anxiety has gone on to later experience an improvement.

It is important that you let the facilitator know if you are experiencing difficulties of any kind so that they can offer you extra support and help you to cope. The facilitator will talk with you about your experience and how best to change it. So far, there has never been a difficulty that could not be resolved. Remember, you can stop taking part in Engage Group at any time. If you decide to withdraw you will be de-briefed and helped to access extra supports if you need them. If it is prior to the third session, you will not have to pay for the rest of the programme.

Your safety is of paramount importance to us and it is crucial that you inform us if you are struggling at all. You can do this before, during or after the group sessions depending on what you are comfortable with. Your facilitator and co-facilitator will check in with you regularly to make sure you are okay.

Enrolment Information

If you would like to take part in Engage Group, you will need to enrol.

To enrol in Engage Group you can either call Youthline to discuss it or send them an email and they will call you. Youthline will help you to assess whether Engage is appropriate for you, make sure that you fully understand what is involved and arrange a time for your interview. They may also help you to access some interim support if you need it.

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If you have problems with anxiety, deciding to take part in Engage Group will probably be a scary step for you to take. However, taking that step could also help you to create some much wanted change. Gaining control over anxiety's negative effects is not easy, but it is totally possible.

For programme delivery information, start dates, queries and feedback about Engage Group, please contact Youthline. Please feel free to contact Miriam Larsen-Barr, service director at Engage Aotearoa and designer of the Engage Group resource, if you have any enquiries about the programme or feedback about its delivery.