**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** 207

**Course Title:** SPACE Treatment Groups for Parents- A Promising Approach to the Treatment of Anxiety in Children and Adolescents

**Course Times:** 7:00 - 8:00 AM

**Course Dates:** Friday, March 10

**Instructors:** Thomas Hurster

**Course Description:** The open session will explore providing SPACE (Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions) treatment, a parent-based treatment program for children and adolescents with anxiety, and related problems, in a group setting. The workshop will center around several SPACE groups conducted in a school setting and explore the process of the participants changing their own behavior which has led to subsequent changes for their anxious children. This is an introduction to SPACE treatment; it is not formal training in the SPACE treatment method itself.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎Explain the central concept underlying the SPACE treatment approach.‎
2. ‎Identify and address parents’ difficulties in keeping the focus on changing their own behavior, ‎rather than their child's.‎
3. ‎Describe the way that SPACE treatment provided in a group mitigates against the powerful shame ‎parents of anxious children experience.‎

**Significant Articles:**

1. Alonso, A., & Rutan, J. S. (1988). The experience of shame and the restoration of self-respect in group ‎therapy. International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 38(1), 3-14.‎
2. Dekel, I., Dorman-Ilan, S., Lang, C., Bar-David, E., Hadas, Z., Shilton, T., Lebowitz, E., and Gothelf, D. ‎‎(2020) The feasibility of a parent group treatment for youth with anxiety disorders and obsessive ‎compulsive disorder. Child Psychiatry and Human Development. DOI:10.1007/s10578-020-01082-6.‎
3. Lebowitz, E. R. (2019). Addressing parental accommodation when treating anxiety in children. Oxford ‎University Press.‎
4. Lebowitz, E. R., and Omer, H. (2013) Treating childhood and adolescent anxiety: A guide for caregivers. ‎John Wiley Press.‎

**Agenda:**

A brief introduction of the presenter, with an overview and history of working with parents around parenting issues in a group format – (5 minutes, Obj. 3, lecture).

-An overview of SPACE Treatment: the central concepts, the structure of the sessions, and the training. The presentation will further focus on the development, preparation for, and structure of SPACE treatment presented in a group format. Particular focus will be on how the group allows participants to explore their shame around their parenting, and how group work allows participants to both help one another in choosing target accommodations and support one another around responses to their children. The presenter will share vignettes from his groups to illustrate points raised- (35 minutes, Obj. 1, 2, & 3, lecture/case study).

-Summary of the approach with a question-and-answer period- (15 minutes, Obj. 1,2, & 3, Q&A/Discussion/Sharing of Experience).

-Evaluations- 5 minutes.

**Assessment Questions:**

Question 1 (include possible answers)

Please describe the ultimate goal of the SPACE treatment approach.

Correct Answer 1

While the focus of the treatment is on parents changing their behavior in two dimensions of their interactions with their anxious child, accommodations and support, the final goal is for their children to better manage their own anxiety.

Question 2 (include possible answers)

What are the two areas of change focus with parents in a SPACE treatment group?

Correct Answer 2

Parental accommodations and the quality of their support.

Question 3 (include possible answers)

SPACE treatment views all parental accommodations to their child's anxiety as being problematic and therefore a suitable target for change. True or False?

Correct Answer 3

False. Not all accommodations to a child's anxiety are problematic, and if fact many accommodations provided by parents are developmentally appropriate, or necessary to the child's safety and well being.

Question 4 (include possible answers)

What aspect of working in a group treatment approach have that is harder to replicate in working with individual families?

Correct Answer 4

Group SPACE treatment allows the members to work through their often debilitating shame around the extent of their accommodations to their child's behaviors through experiencing others stories. The group provides a collective understanding and forgiveness for one another, and promotes more open sharing.

Question 5 (include possible answers)

Are there any other benefits of providing SPACE treatment in a group format?

Correct Answer 5

Yes. It is efficient and allows a clinician to reach a number of families in the same time frame. Secondly, it facilitates the different parts of the program through the joint problem solving and sharing of personal experiences that a group approach has over a single clinician working with one family.

Question 6 (include possible answers)

What are the different components of the parents change plan?

Correct Answer 6

1) Analyzing their current accommodations, and choosing one or two to address and to modify/change; 2) develop new support statements; 3) anticipate some of their child's possible behavioral reactions to their change behavior; 4) enlist a group of supportive "team" members to offer encouragement and support to the parent; 5) present the child with a letter informing the child of the changes that they will be making while offering words of support and encouragement.; 6) track and chart occasions where the parent was able to successfully comply with the accommodation changes.

Question 7 (include possible answers)

How does SPACE treatment work with child resistance and behavioral acting out around parental changes in accommodation?

Correct Answer 7

SPACE treatment spends time with parents anticipating their child's reaction and planning on their supportive response while not re-engaging in the accommodating behavior. It encourages parents to develop a team of supporters and assistants in this endeavor.

Question 8 (include possible answers)

Can the group itself be part of the any parents support team around their changes?

Correct Answer 8

Absolutely, YES. This is one of the advantages of providing SPACE treatment in a group format.

Question 9 (include possible answers)

Who developed SPACE treatment and has there been research to support its efficacy?

Correct Answer 9

The developer is Eli Lebowitz PhD of the Yale Child Study Center. There are currently nine research studies documenting the effectiveness of SPACE treatment that have been published in leading journals, and more in the review process. Additionally Dr. Lebowitz and his team have published three books and manuals, as well as one video.

Question 10 (include possible answers)

Did completion of this workshop prepare me to begin conducting SPACE treatment groups myself?

Correct Answer 10

No. This was an introductory overview to describe the potential to SPACE treatment in a group format. Clinicians are expected to do the two day basic training in SPACE offered through Yale Child Study Center before attempting to undertake SPACE treatment on their own.