

RESEARCH STUDY: AN INTERVENTION FOR PARENTS AND THEIR TEENS / YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER / ASPERGER SYNDROME

Are you feeling stressed out and looking for support? We are providing group therapy free of charge to adolescents and young adults with ASD and their parents at Geneva Centre for Autism.



PURPOSE

- To evaluate an intervention that helps both teens and parents reduce their stress and increase control over their negative feelings. We also aim to improve the quality of relationships between teens and their parents.

DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT

- The intervention helps families use mindfulness meditation and cognitive therapy techniques to relate to each other in a new way.
- Research has shown that mindfulness helps improve attention and focus, as well as reduce stress and improve quality of life.
- We are conducting research to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, and all participants will need to participate in the research in order to participate in the group therapy.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Males and females 13 – 22 years of age with a previous diagnosis of ASD and one or both of their parents.
- Individuals with ASD must have at least average intellectual functioning and verbal skills.
- Must be able to participate in a group with others with ASD and their parents.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

- Screening and Mindfulness Orientation: July 2016
 - Adolescents and their parents will attend a two hour Screening and Mindfulness Orientation on July 13 OR 20, 2016 depending on your availability and that of the staff.
 - You will meet with a researcher and one of the clinicians leading the project, who will explain more about the therapy, give you a chance to complete the research questionnaires, and make sure the kind of group we are running is a good fit for everyone.
- Weekly Sessions: January to March 2017
 - Be available to participate in 9 weekly sessions (1.5 hours each) on Wednesdays. The actual dates that you would need to be available would be: January 18, 25; February 1, 8, 15, 22; March 1, 8, 15. There will also be a booster session on May 17.
 - The adolescent and parent groups will run separately but at the same time.
 - Each session involves mindfulness exercises and discussions.
- Research Measures
 - To help us learn more about the effectiveness of the program, we will ask you to fill out questionnaires and other research measures at 5 time points (August 24, November 2, January 11, March 22, and May 24) for 1 hour.
 - As well, you will be asked to complete a 2-minute online questionnaire weekly from the beginning of August to the end of May.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

- Participating families may get personal benefit in the form of more positive family interactions, less conflict, reduction in problem behaviours, and reduction in stress.
- Adolescents receive a \$20 gift certificate to Indigo / Chapters as a thank you for the time they spend completing questionnaires in connection with this study at the end of the project.

HOW CAN I SIGN UP?

- If you would like to learn more about the intervention and research, please email Dr. Sandra Salem-Guirgis at sfsalem@yorku.ca and put "MINDFULNESS TREATMENT" in the subject line.
- **Availability is on a first come / first serve basis. Please contact us by June 30, 2016.**