

School refusal- what should a treatment approach contain?

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Hemmasittarprogrammet

a manual based program to increase school attendance



HSP – MAGELUNGENS HEMMASITTARPROGRAM

Manual för behandlare

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What your method needs address

- Who gets treatment?
- What kind of information you collect?
- What do you do with the information?
- How do you compile the information
- What theoretical framework do you use to explain the problems that the student and the family experiences?

Other relevant questions

- What kind of interventions are suggested and how do you follow through with them?
- What are the professions of the staff?
- How do you evaluate the treatment
- What kind of resources do you have at your disposal
- Relationship to other actors in the field

The background of the slide features three overlapping semi-circles in a light yellow color, arranged horizontally. A white horizontal band is centered across the middle of the slide, containing the title text.

Being absent from school in different ways

School refusal

- School is associated with negative feelings, most often anxiety.
- Parents know about the behaviour.
- No delinquency or substance abuse.
- The child often is isolated at home. Stays in his/her room seldom have social activities.
- The child wants to succeed in school!!!

Källa: Fremont, W.P.
(2003)

Truancy

- School is perceived as boring
- The child tries to hide the behaviour from parents.
- Sometimes antisocial behaviour. Spends time with peers who have similar problems.
- The child is not at home during school hours.
- Have no interest in school.

School refusal

Truancy

Differentiation between SR and TR

Scientific Support:

- Different associations with internalizing/externalizing

Egger et al. (2003) community study:

- SR, not TR, associated with anxiety dx, school-related fears, and performance anxiety
- Odds ratio for depressive dx is 3.4 for SR and 1.2 for TR

School refusal

Truancy

Differentiation between SR and TR

Scientific Support:

- Different associations with internalizing/externalizing
- Different associations with other variables

SR, not TR: Bullied (Egger et al., 2003; Havik et al., 2015)
Attend dangerous school (Egger et al., 2003)

TR > SR: Special education needs (Havik et al., 2015)
Low parent monitoring (Havik et al., 2015)

TR, not SR: Lax parental supervision (Egger et al., 2003)
Impoverished home setting (Egger et al., 2003)

(Heyne et al., *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 2019)

**What characterizes a "hemmasittare"?
Which children are viable to get treatment
in HSP?**



The youths we meet in treatment

- Absent for at least a year, Extensive and complex problem behaviors.
- Always referred to us from social services.
- Have been given previous interventions from school and/or out patient treatment centers. Often from other actors to.
- Boys/Girls - 60/40, Most often in grades 5-9
- Neuropsychiatry, psychiatry, difficulties in handling school environment.

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The youths we meet in treatment

- The youths problems is affecting family climate, parent abilitys and the relationship between parents and youth.
- Often anxiety, most common different kinds of social anxiety.
- School and thoughts of school induces¹ a lot of anxiety.
- Often isolated at home with little or no contact with others.

The youths we meet in treatment

- Loss of ADL and regular routines when it comes to sleeping, eating and hygiene.
- Lacking skills to manage anxiety. Avoidance is often the only strategy.
- Their school often need help with how to help when it comes to anxiety.

The youths we meet in treatment

- Learning difficulties are rare. Talents can be unevenly distributed.
- Unable to go to regular treatment. Don't make it to appointments with for example BUP.
- Collaboration between various agencies often does not work well. "That's not my job"

Hemmasittarprogrammet, Hsp

Learning
theory,
systemic
theory, CBT

Child
Parents
School

Cooperation
Coordination
Teamwork

Assessment
Treatment
Maintenance

Manualbased
program –
individualize
d action

Assess before you suggest interventions

- Are there any clear precipitating causes?
- What factors perpetuate (maintains) the absence?
- What is the function of being absent?

Based on this suggest
treatment and
interventions



Assess before you suggest interventions

- Obtain information from parents, student and school by:
 - Semi-structured interviews, standardized questionnaires
 - Draw network map and line of life
 - Read previous materials
 - Observations
- Meetings at home, at office or in school. Or online, through games, apps, social media etc etc.
- Work on getting rid of ambiguity (remember ASD).
- Find ways to get information, adapt way of asking questions. Help make things clearer when asking.
- Create **common** goals that direct treatment
- Done right this creates alliance

Example of questions to youth

- What are your interests?
- What do you do when you are at home?
- Do you see friends?
- Miss school?
- How has school been for you (if unclear ask in other ways)?
- What has been hard? In what way?
- Anyone or anything you like at school?

Clarifie the purpose

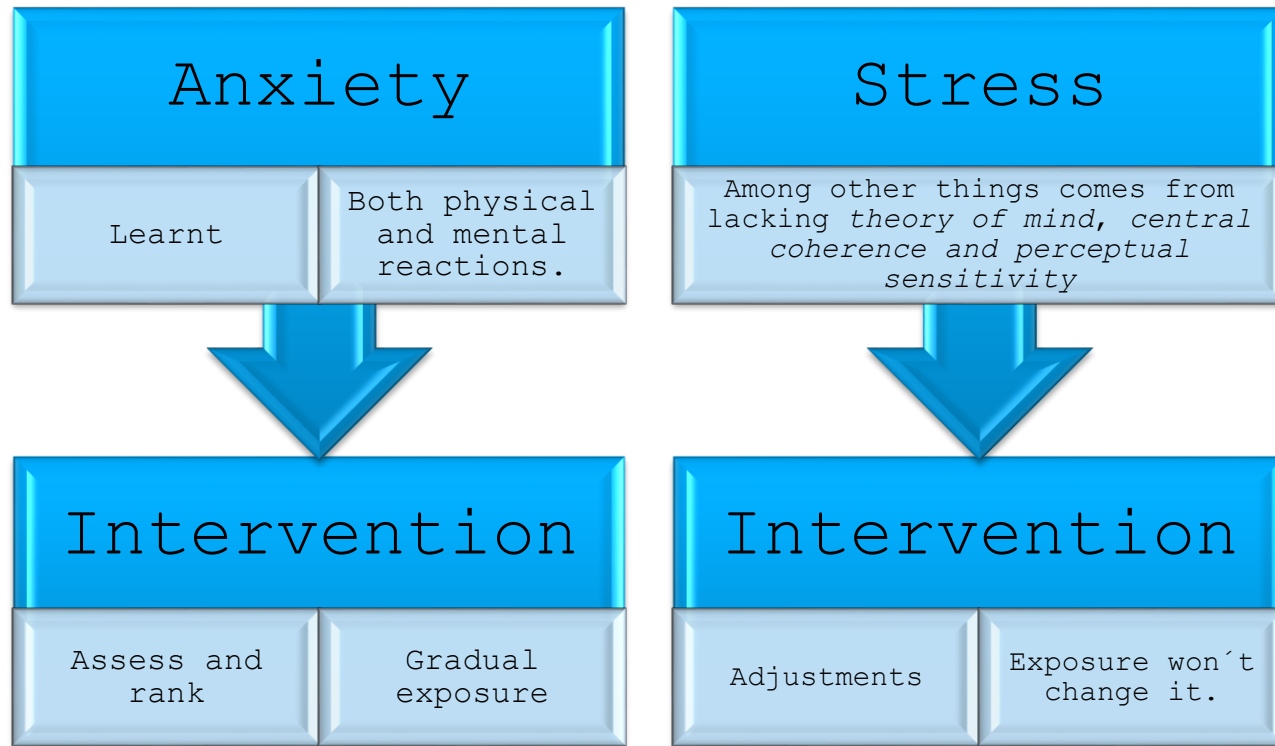
- What shall I do?
- Where shall I be?
- With whom shall I be?
- For how long time shall I do it?
- What happens afterwards?
- What do I need to bring with?
- Why shall I do it?



Making the questions easier to answer

- How you ask questions will determine the kind of answers you get.
- Hone your skills in creating good assessment materials

Major obstacles?



Timeline, how has school been for you previously?

Åk 1

Åk 3

Åk 5

Åk 7



Schoolfactors

	Works Fine	Interesti ng	Boring	To Easy	Need Help	Don't understan d purpose
Math						
Finnish						
Breaks						
Eat in dining hall						
Phys ed						

Factors in home

It's hard getting up in the morning	Yes	Sometimes	No
I sleep well	Yes	Sometimes	No
I worry about my family	Yes	Sometimes	No
I often feel sick	Yes	Sometimes	No
I eat well	Yes	Sometimes	No

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Other ways of asking

Mark if anything fits your situation

Advantages of being home

Slipper passa tider
Slipper känna mig utanför
Kan vara med min hund
Slipper jobbiga raster
Slipper visa mig dum

Advantages of being in school

Jag kan lära mig saker
Jag slipper bli så stressad över att misslyckas
Jag får bättre rutiner
Jag får betyg
Större chans att kunna flytta hemifrån och få ett jobb

Disadvantages of being home

Jag blir stressad över att missa skolan
Mamma och pappa blir arga
Tråkigt
Svårt att få jobb

Disadvantages of being in school

Jag har inga kompisar och vet inte vad jag ska göra på raster
Äta i matsalen
Måste vara på lektioner som jag inte begriper
Måste svara på frågor om varför jag inte varit där

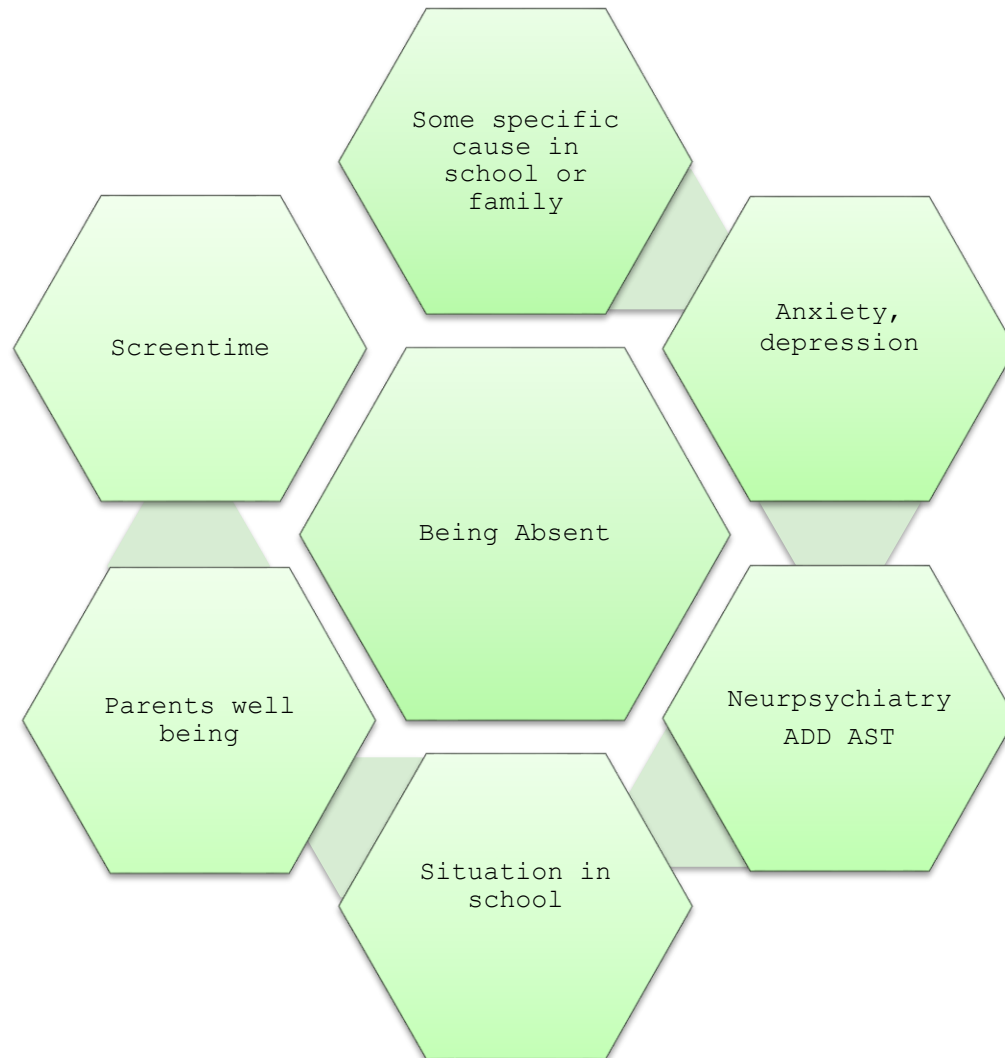
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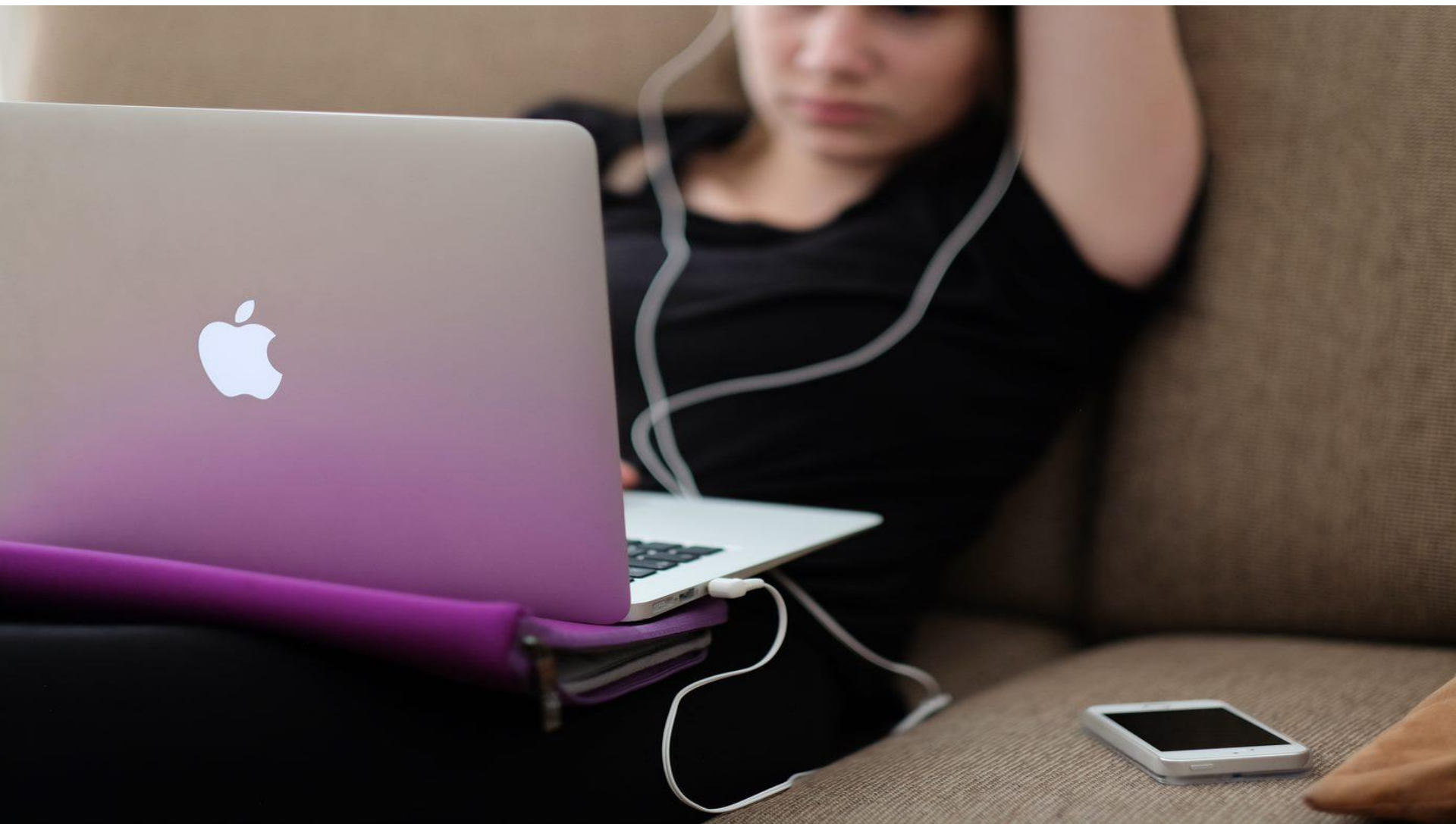
Working actively for helping young peoples voices being heard



- Relationship: "For me to be able to talk about difficult things, I need to know the person I'm talking to"
- Interest: "What helped me the most was meeting someone genuinely interested in me that didn't judge me"
- Behavior is a language. "Don't assume you know why I do the things I do, ask me!"
- Respect: "If I tell you something it doesn't mean you can tell everyone else. Check with me regarding who need to know"
- Warmth: "I want to be met with warmth. Show me I'm missed when I'm not there"

What do we often see during assessment?





Behaviors are family and children trying to solve problems.

I noticed that..

I'm always late

Never at science class

Won't follow made plans despite making them yesterday

Play computer games all waking hours, never leaving home. Internet gaming disorder?

Aha, so it's different? In what ways?

I worry about not getting to school. Have trouble locating school. Often get stomach aches.

Classroom is associated with bad memories or events

In the morning when I woke up it felt impossible. I'm so stressed about failing all the time.

Online I have friends. They understand me. I feel a sense of belonging that I don't have in school.

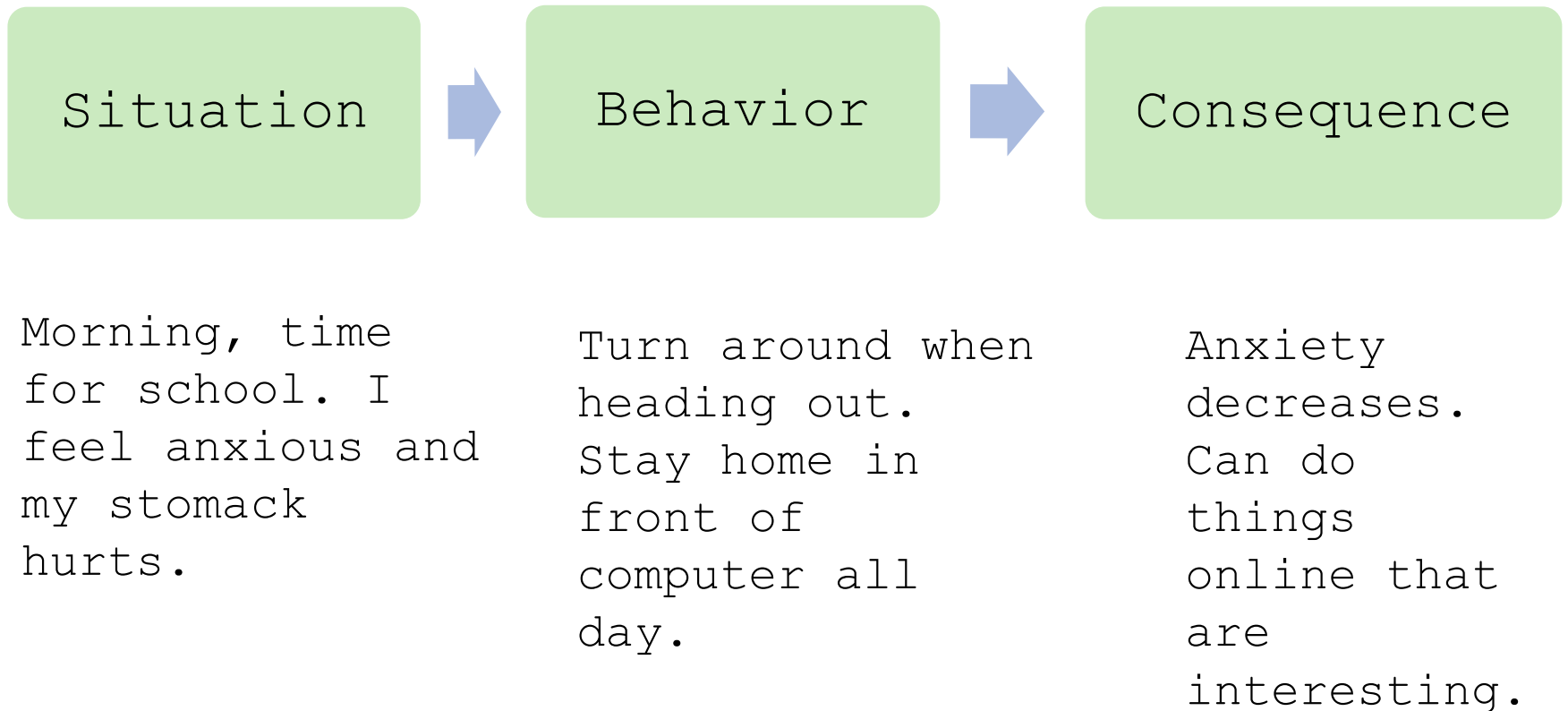
I am curious how it is for you...

Is it ok that I'm asking?

Structuring information

Excesses	deficits
<p>Being at home</p> <p>Playing computer games</p> <p>Drinking cola</p> <p>Avoidance of problems</p> <p>Conflicts about school</p>	<p>Being in school</p> <p>Seeing friends</p> <p>Activities outside home</p> <p>Being with family doing things</p> <p>ADL, sleep, food, routines</p> <p>Using public transportation</p> <p>Social skills</p>
<p>Negative thoughts about future</p> <p>Stomack aches</p>	<p>Strategies for handling anxiety</p>

The function of behaviors



Advantages of looking at the function of behaviors

- Helps you look at problems in a curious and non judgemental way which helps with working alliance.
- Understanding this particular family/youth. Seeing what is unique.
- Understanding the situation the family is in. Knowing that you might do same things facing the same problems and situations.
- A good foundation for bringing in talk concerning change "Change talk".

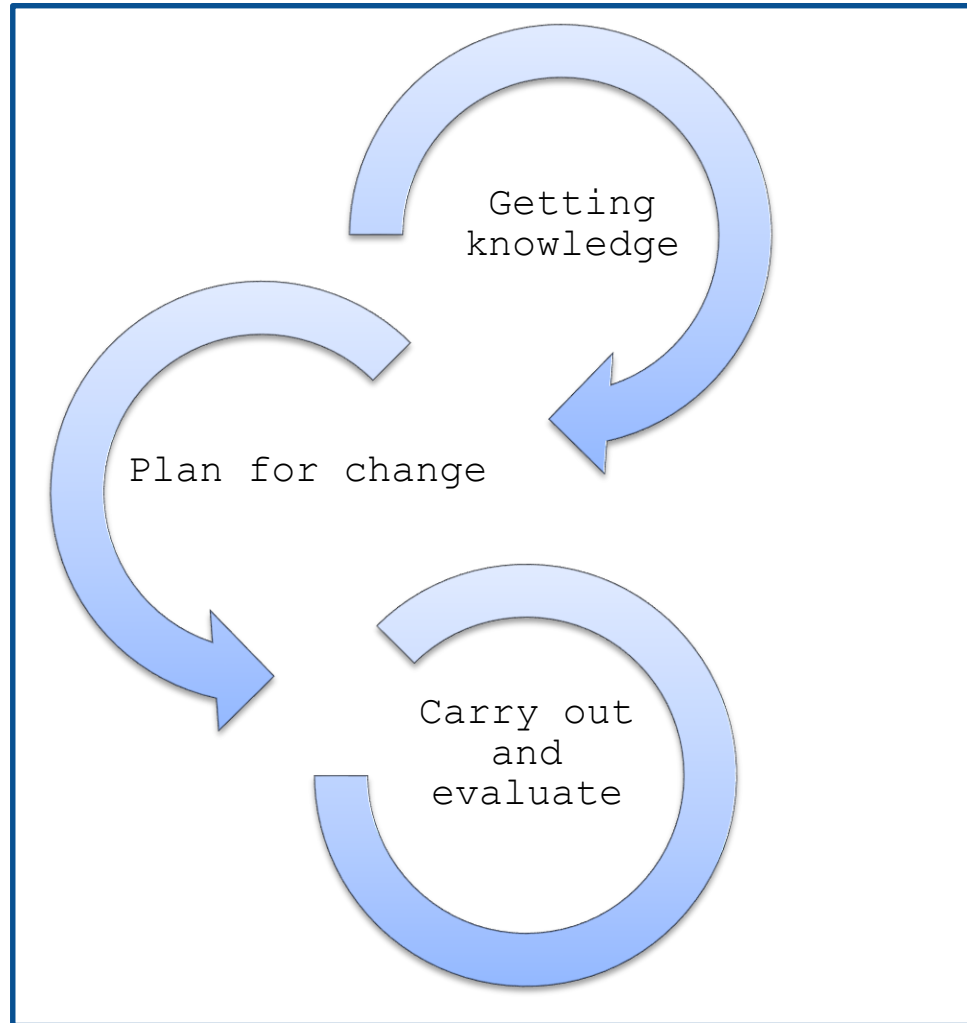
Sharing the information that you have gathered

- This is how we understand things.
- These are our suggestions regarding interventions.

What do you think about it? Wanna give it a try?



Foundations of change



Activities/interventions to increase school attendance



Includes student,
parents & school
staff



Which adaptations are
necessary to meet the
pupils needs?
Are there conditions
to do this?



Intense & flexible.
Creative!



Coordinate the work,
but be responsive and
don't forget to do a
joint planning for
gradual school
approach



Unity.
Fill the gap between
family, school &
treatment.



Enable cooperation by
solving practical
obstacles such as
secrecy/confidentiali
ty - consent to talk
about things that are
important and
relevant for
increased attendance.

**Parental
support**

weekly meetings
coordination,
hotline

Coordination

Communicate
information
between
meetings, call
for meetings

**Approaching
school,
adaptions,
exposure, skills
training**

**Structure,
circadian,
activities of
daily life**

Adaptions

At home, in
school, alliance

Activation

enjoyable &
meaningful

**Cooperation,
family, school,
treatment**

Skills

**training,
practical skills,
social skills**

**Quality
time**

family
climate,
activities

**Behavioral
change,**

psychoeducation &
rational, exposure

In which way does that bring me closer to my goals?



Clarifie the purpose

- What shall I do?
- Where shall I be?
- With whom shall I be?
- For how long time shall I do it?
- What happens afterwards?
- What do I need with me?
- Why shall I do it?



To evaluate and plan the next step



"It's so easy to start an intervention without a plan for which the next step should be"

Maintainance-

reduced intensity and sustainabilyte over time



Is there a magic wand or a magic recipe?

- Agree on a working method
- Remember alliance, clarity & predictability
- Assess the school absenteeism before you decide and start interventions.
- Listen to the youth!
- Plan, perform intervention & evaluate. Redirect if necessary!
- Think multimodal - involve both pupil, parents and school staff. Cooperate!
- Ask for and accept help if you get stuck.
Long-term absenteeism and complex problematic demands coordinated interventions from school, social welfare service and child psychiatry.

Experiences implementing the program in municipalities

- Must be anchored with politicians and officials
- Dialogue between different departments.
- Spread knowledge about the method to as many as possible
- Early adopters and enthusiasts are important.
- Clarity about roles and assignments
- Knowing the work and roles of others helps with cooperation and coordination
- Patience, patience and patience
- Managers who listen, want to cooperate and succeed.



Municipalities
where Magelungen
conducting
outpatient
treatment/HSP

Gävle
Uppsala
Västerås
Örebro
Solna
Stockholm
Södertälje
Jönköping
Göteborg
Helsingborg
Malmö



Municipalities where
social welfare
service & school
implemented HSP

Umeå
Sundsvall
Älvkarleby
Ludvika
Smedjebacken
Enköping
Örebro
Östermalm (Sthlm)
Lidingö (Sthlm)
Eskilstuna
Gotland
*Ringerike (pilot
Norway)*

Interested to become a pilot?

Contact

robert.palmer@magelungen.
com or Valteri!

Thanks for your attention!

The book
"Hemmasittare och vägen tillbaka"
(Kohti koulua – Hemmasittare-malli
kouluakämättömien tukena)
contains questionnaires and other
material for assessment

You can also download them free on
www.magelungen.com



'behandling'

'öppenvårdsprogram'

'hsp-hemmasittarprogram'

'bok'

