

Parents' experiences of their child receiving an anxiety disorder diagnosis

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Do Mental Health Diagnoses Help or Hinder Children?

There has been some debate about whether children should be diagnosed with mental health disorders

Potential advantages:

- Help families better understand their child's difficulties
- Facilitate access to treatment
- Facilitate educational support from schools

Potential harms:

- Being 'labelled' (being viewed as their diagnosis)
- Stigmatisation
- Changes people's expectations of the child and the child's expectations of themselves

Discussions about Diagnoses in the Media

Diagnosis was very helpful to me and my family. It finally gave a name to why I felt and behaved the way I did. Until then I was very confused and lost, unable to work out why I wasn't like other people.¹

People start seeing you differently. Professionals, family, friends.²

It was nice to realise that it wasn't just me being weird, being different. To know that there are groups and there are other people that do suffer with it, which really does make it easier to deal with.³

Diagnosis helps people get the right treatment.⁴

The Current Study

We want to find out if it is helpful for children to receive an anxiety disorder diagnosis and the best way to share findings from diagnostic assessments with families

We will be interviewing parents to find out more about their experiences of their child receiving an anxiety disorder diagnosis

Recruitment

- Families will be recruited via the AnDY Research Clinic
- Children referred to the AnDY Research Clinic will undergo a diagnostic assessment as part of their initial appointment
- Parents of children (aged 7-12 years) diagnosed with an anxiety disorder will be invited to take part in an interview

Interview

During the interview we will be asking parents:

- How they feel about their child's anxiety disorder diagnosis
- What was helpful/unhelpful about the diagnostic process
- Their views on how best to share information about the diagnosis with families
- Any suggested improvements to the diagnostic process

Clinical Implications

A better understanding of parents' experiences can help to inform guidelines about the use of child anxiety disorder diagnoses in clinical practice and the best way to communicate diagnoses with families

