

# Developing And Implementing a School-Based Support Program to Alleviate Anxiety and Depression in Children from Divorced Families

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## ABSTRACT

This study assesses the effectiveness of a school-based support program meant to reduce anxiety and sadness among children from split households. Utilizing a pre-test/post-test approach, the research involved testing participants' anxiety and depression levels before and after the program. The sample comprised of 10 youngsters who were tested using standardized anxiety and depression questionnaires. Results demonstrated a significant reduction in average anxiety levels from 25.0 to 20.5 and in average depression scores from 29.0 to 24.2. Individual changes varied, with decreases ranging from 2 to 8 points for anxiety and 2 to 9 points for depression. The findings imply that the program was helpful in enhancing emotional well-being, demonstrating its potential as a valuable intervention for children confronting the psychological problems of parental divorce.

**Keywords:** School-Based Support Program, Anxiety, Depression, Children from Divorced Families.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's society, clinical depression, anxiety, and stress are all too common among students, making it evident that this is a pervasive issue that needs to be addressed. Students are a distinct category of people who are now enduring a key developmental stage in which they are moving from an adolescent phase to an adulthood phase; this can be one of the most stressful times in a person's life. A number of prospective students face anxiety as a result of their efforts to adapt, keep good grades, plan for the future, and successfully handle a huge number of duties while living away from home.

Students often battle with the pressure of massive course loads, heightened degrees of competitive situations, and their inability to adequately manage the great expectations placed on them by their parents. This causes them to experience stress, which has a detrimental impact on their mental health and can lead to a variety of undesirable reactions, including loss of sleep, decreased concentration, lack of confidence when dealing with parents, decreased self-esteem, and an increase in anxiety, as well as more symptoms of depression, an increase in interpersonal conflict, susceptibility to substance abuse, thoughts about attempting suicide, and so on. Few students acquire clinical depression as a reaction to such stress; rather, they learn that they are unable to keep themselves together in the face of it. It's likely that the pupils don't recognize they're depressed even though they have a tendency to cry easily, skip courses, or withdraw themselves from other people. According to the findings of a significant number of research, clinical depression among college students is widespread and ubiquitous in many regions of the world, and the frequency of this illness has been gradually and consistently growing over the past several decades.

During this time, psychological stress is found to be a common health issue amongst student groups due to the availability of resources, competition between oneself and others to progress and perform better than others, growth in various aspects; all of which they have to work hard to accomplish in order to achieve their goals and realise their dreams. On the other hand, they encounter hurdles in the shape of a number of problems that are caused by psychological factors. These elements include variances in their intellectual capacity, changes in their personalities and their diverse temperaments, inequalities in gender, age, etc., among other things. In addition to the psychological elements, additional variables that might cause stress include stressful situations, academic obligations, stress from the parents, trouble in financial domains, and the varied and different social stressors that can contribute to the exposure of stress in a student's life. It would appear that the starting age is increasing younger on average, and yet over two thirds of students do not discuss or seek therapy for



difficulties connected to their mental health and wellness. As a consequence of this, the majority of teenagers, this constitutes around one third of the whole adolescent population, exhibit symptoms of worry and depression.

It is crucial and of vital importance for the student population to have a good knowledge on mental health and the problems faced, the symptoms of early diagnosis, effective treatment, and the services provided by various groups by the institution, state, and government. This is due to the fact that having this knowledge is both necessary and extremely important. As a result, it's critical to take action to oversee students' health and wellness in educational institutions. This will lessen the detrimental effects of stress and help student groups reach their full potential in the future by enabling the early detection of symptoms and the provision of treatment.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW



**Pedro-Carroll, J. L. (2005)** examines divorce-related risks and protective factors that give an empirical direction for the content of effective programs for children. The exciting potential of child-focused interventions is addressed, including examples of programs with evidence of effectiveness. The Children of Divorce Intervention Program is described in greater detail as an example of a preventive program with six controlled studies documenting multiple benefits to children, including reductions in anxiety, behavior problems, somatic symptoms, and increases in their healthy adjustment at home and at school. A vision for future research and practice is explored, including best practices for adapting children's programs to court-connected services and a paradigm change requiring systematic preventive outreach to all separating parents with small children, before troubles become rooted and chronic.

**Hald, G. M., et.al., (2020)** This reports the results of a 1-year longitudinal randomized controlled trial study of the Cooperation After Divorce online intervention platform for adults going through a divorce. Participants included 1,856 Danish divorcees who, on average, commenced the intervention within 1 week of legal divorce and answered to the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised anxiety, depression, and somatization subscales at baseline, 3, 6, and 12 months following juridical divorce. Data analysis comprised of linear mixed-effect model analyses, mean group comparisons, and 1-sample t tests to compare the 12-month follow-up with national normative data. The study found that the intervention platform significantly reduced anxious, depressive, and somatization symptoms among divorcees in the intervention group over a 1-year period and that the degree of these benefits was large in effect size (Cohen's  $d > .78$ ). Further, it was found that after 1 year after divorce, symptom levels of all 3 outcomes were similar to the population norms for participants in the intervention group but still markedly increased for those in the control group.

**Leys, C., et.al., (2020)** considers a relationship linking depression and anxiety disorders (DAD) during the adulthood of children of divorced/married parents via the perceived level of parental conflict. We expected that the level of perceived parental conflict that would account for the influence of divorce on the level of DAD during adulthood. A sample of 121 persons (MAge = 26.14, SD = 1.74, 91 women), comprising of 55 offspring of divorced parents, 66 children of parents who are still cohabiting, completed a questionnaire evaluating DAD, and perceived amount of parental conflict. Although results do not reveal evidence of differences between the two groups, the level of perceived conflict strongly predicted DAD during adulthood in both groups although with a minor impact size. This may suggest that exposure to parental disagreement rather than separation itself predicts the long-term repercussions of divorce..

**Avci, R., et.al., (2021)** study aimed to evaluate if post-divorce parental conflict predicted physical aggression, rage and symptoms of anxiety and depression among university students. One hundred and sixty students (96 females and 64 males) who were enrolled at MuğlaSıtkıKoçman University, whose parents were divorced and whose ages were between 18 and 24 were included in the study. Post-Divorce Parental Conflict Scale, physical



aggression and rage dimensions of Buss-Perry Aggression Scale, and anxiety and depression dimensions of Brief Symptom Inventory were employed as data collection techniques. Path analysis was applied to statistically observed variables in this investigation. The outcomes of the current study demonstrated that post-divorce parental conflict predicted physical aggression, rage, and feelings of anxiety and sadness in the university students. Post-divorce parental conflict explained 7% of the variance in physical aggressiveness, 5% of the variance in anger, 15% of the variance in anxiety symptoms, and 13% of the variance in depressive symptoms.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a pre-test/post-test design to examine the effectiveness of a school-based support program in relieving anxiety and sadness among children from divorced homes. The approach comprises assessing anxiety and depression levels before and after the execution of the program to measure improvements over time.

#### 3.2. Participants

Ten children from divorced homes who are enrolled in the participating schools make up the study sample. These adolescents were selected based on their permission and qualifying criteria, which include having considerable anxiety and/or depression as reported by school counselors and parents.

#### 3.3. Data Collection

- Pre-Program Assessment:** Participants' anxiety and depression levels were evaluated using standardized assessment methods prior to the start of the treatment. For anxiety, a validated anxiety scale was used, and for depression, a standardized depression inventory was employed.
- Program Implementation:** The support program was tailored to meet the unique needs of children from divorced homes and includes group therapy, counseling sessions, and courses on coping strategies. The initiative was put into action during a six-month period..
- Post-Program Assessment:** The same standardized instruments used for the pre-program evaluation were used to test the participants' anxiety and depression levels once the program was over.

#### 3.4. Data Analysis

- Quantitative Analysis:** The change in anxiety and depression ratings was ascertained by analyzing the data from pre- and post-program assessments. Means and standard deviations were computed for the pre- and post-program scores, as well as other descriptive data. The program's overall effectiveness was assessed by computing the average change in scores.
- Individual Change Analysis:** We looked at the shift in each person's score to find differences in the program's effects. Each participant's pre- and post-program score differences were computed and examined to determine the extent and importance of changes.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Impact on Anxiety Levels

Student ID	Pre-Program Anxiety Score	Post-Program Anxiety Score	Change in Anxiety Score
001	24	18	-6
002	30	25	-5
003	22	20	-2
004	25	17	-8
005	27	22	-5
006	20	15	-5
007	28	21	-7
008	23	19	-4
009	26	22	-4
010	24	18	-6

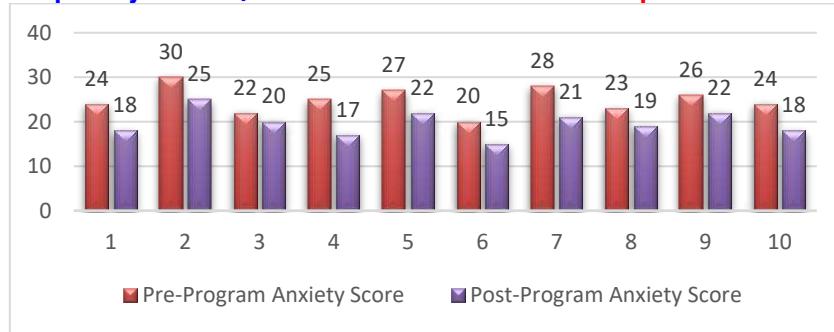


Figure 1: Impact on Anxiety Levels

The data presented in Table 1 highlights the effectiveness of the support program in addressing anxiety among children from divorced families. Prior to the program, the average anxiety score was 25.0, which decreased to 20.5 after the program, reflecting an average reduction of 4.5 points. This reduction suggests that the program had a substantial impact on lowering anxiety levels across the participant group.

The individual results further illustrate the program's success. Changes in anxiety scores ranged from a decrease of 2 points to a decrease of 8 points. For instance, Student ID 004 experienced the most significant reduction, with an 8-point drop in their anxiety score, indicating a substantial improvement in their emotional state. On the other hand, Student ID 003 saw the smallest decrease of 2 points, though this still reflects a positive change. The overall trend shows that most students experienced a meaningful reduction in their anxiety, with consistent improvements observed across the board.

These findings underscore the program's effectiveness in mitigating anxiety, as evidenced by the substantial declines in scores for a majority of participants. The program appears to have successfully contributed to strengthening the emotional well-being of the children engaged, offering essential support in managing anxiety related to their family situations.

Table 2: Impact on Depression Levels

Student ID	Pre-Program Depression Score	Post-Program Depression Score	Change in Depression Score
001	28	22	-6
002	33	29	-4
003	27	25	-2
004	30	21	-9
005	31	28	-3
006	25	20	-5
007	32	26	-6
008	29	23	-6
009	30	27	-3
010	28	24	-4

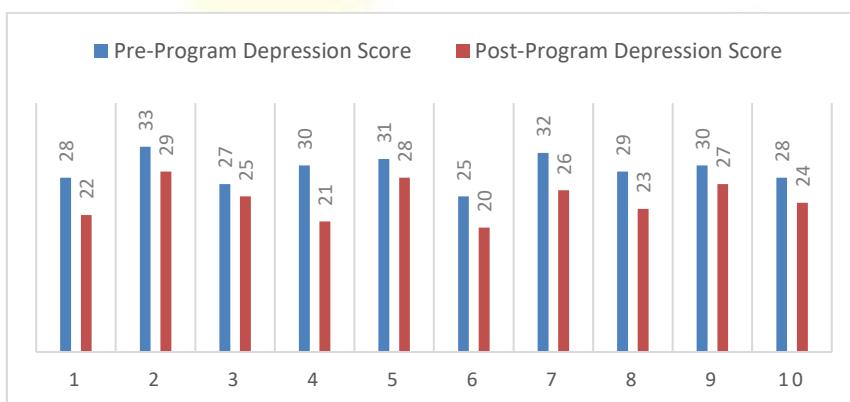


Figure 2: Impact on Depression Levels



The data in Table 2 indicates the influence of the support program on depression levels among children from divorced homes. Each student's depression score was tested before and after the program, and the change in score demonstrates the program's influence.

The results reveal an overall reduction in depression levels for most subjects. The average pre-program depression level was 29.0, which fell to an average post-program score of 24.2. This shows an overall average reduction of 4.8 points in depression levels across the individuals.

Specifically, the modifications differed among students, with reductions ranging from 2 to 9 points. The most significant drop was noticed in Student ID 004, who experienced a 9-point fall in their depression score, while the smallest reduction was a 2-point decline, noted for Student ID 003. The consistency in reductions across the majority of students shows that the program was helpful in relieving depressive symptoms, while the level of improvement varied across individuals.

Overall, the data confirms the success of the program in decreasing depression levels among children from divorced households, as indicated by the fall in scores for most participants. This shows that the program's interventions and support systems were helpful in addressing and reducing depression symptoms within the target population.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study clearly reveals that the school-based support program considerably lowered anxiety and depression levels among children from divorced households. The pre- and post-program assessments demonstrated a considerable decrease in average anxiety scores from 25.0 to 20.5 and in average depression scores from 29.0 to 24.2. This reduction shows the program's success in minimizing emotional discomfort associated with family separation. While individual improvements varied, with some participants experiencing considerable decreases and others more moderate changes, the overall trend indicates a good influence. The findings underline the program's usefulness in providing vital support and boosting emotional well-being for children in challenging circumstances, establishing its function as an effective intervention for managing anxiety and depression in this demographic.

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