

No, I can't! Overcoming school refusal

MHPN WEBINAR

Wednesday 10th April 2024

The webinar platform

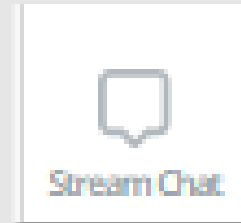
To interact with the webinar platform and to access resources, select the following options:

Supporting Resources

A teal rectangular button with rounded corners and a white border, containing the text "View Supporting Resources" in white.


Click on this button under the video panel to access resources (i.e. slides, case study and panel bios).

Live Chat



To open the audience chat box, click on this icon located in the top right hand side corner of your screen.

Technical Support

A white rectangular button with a grey border, containing the text "Tech Support" in black.

Click on this button in the top right-hand corner of your screen

The webinar will provide the audience the opportunity to:

- Identify mental health associations, comorbidities and patterns of behaviour of students refusing to attend school.
- Identify tips and strategies that can improve students' mental health to overcome school refusal.
- Examine the importance of collaborating and making accurate referrals when supporting students who are refusing to attend school.

General Points

- Turning prisoners into visitors into patients/clients
- Be curious, not judgmental
- Invest in a therapeutic relationship first
- Keep expectations realistic



Dr. Tim Jones

“Carleen” Initial reflections

- Who isn't in the room?
- How does the family communicate?
- How is mum?
- What is school like?



Dr. Tim Jones

“Carleen” Possible directions

- Chat about grief and security
- Positive routines
- Explore enablers/barriers of a morning
- Role of the teacher in starting the day well - I'd send an email



Dr. Tim Jones

“Hong” Initial reflections

- Sensitive to culture and its expectations
- Sensitive to language
- Getting to/through the somatic
- What has past school experience been like?



Dr. Tim Jones

“Hong” Possible directions

- Need to be confident in approaching the pain - ‘internal vs external’ causes is how I normalize
- Talking about adversity and self-reflection
- Explore self esteem and attitudes to self
- Shared goals



Dr. Tim Jones

Where to start?

- The first thing I will be wishing to do, is fully understand the problem. I would be sitting back and asking about their history, what growing up was like? Were there any major life events, social life etc?
- This starts to paint a picture in my mind of are there any previous difficulties adding to this presentation ie: trauma.
- I want to know of their culture, diversity and how they identify.
- I would also check for any other diagnosis, family history and even try and speak to parents. I want to find their strengths as well, this is KEY.
- This becomes part of a comprehensive biopsychosocial-culture assessment process to better understand how to help.



Matthew Povey

But.....then what?

- I would want to understand Hong's family and cultural dynamics (note: there isn't always culture that is strong in children). I would also want to better understand what Hong had been experiencing with the other students and teacher. This connection 'empathic validation' of the affective state (such as, feeling alone, scared) will help to better help Hong trust.
- I would also consider what makes it hard for Hong to help seek, instead engaging in avoidance strategies. Is there a learning issue, for example?
- What environmental factors, such as bullying on the bus?



Matthew Povey

Where from there then?



Hong would likely need support from the school (as would Carleen's case) to manage the bullying and potential targeted teaching.



Engaging Hong's family (with consent) would also be useful to give them a deeper understanding of where this behaviour is coming from, the difficulties he has faced.



It would be important to be mindful of culture, as some do not view mental ill health in a positive light. This should be factored when communicating with the family and is highlighting the need for comprehensive assessment to understand all the working dynamics.



Culturally appropriate allied health supports should be further explored.



Matthew Povey

Then what?

- Stay engaged to provide warm handover to help with other service referrals.
- Support Hong to connect and develop his own sense of identity by exploring how experiences effect him. This will aim to improve 'reflective functioning'.
- 'Reflective Parenting' may be useful to support Hong's parents to better connect with his experiences, if appropriate.
- Regular review of both Hong's goals, where we are at (using outcome measures ie K10 or SQD) and the family's goals, with next steps but planning collaboratively around their care.



Matthew Povey

Key Points

- Parents are key partners to work with and empower, not problems to solve or overcome.
- Be curious and empathic.
- Work with the family to get as complete a picture as possible of what underlies the school attendance difficulties – consider student-level, family-level, and school and community-level factors.
- Support the family to work towards the child's school/education engagement goals.



Prof. Marie Yap

'Carleen': Individual and family-level considerations

- Explore her fear about 'leaving Mum alone all day'
 - Has she shared this with any supportive adult?
 - Is Mum aware of this as an underlying reason for Carleen not going to school?
 - Strengths and protective factors to leverage?
- How are Mum and other family members doing since Nonna's passing?
 - Any additional support required for them?
 - Capacity to support Carleen through her school-attendance difficulties



Prof. Marie Yap

'Carleen': School and community-level considerations

- Carleen's connection with school
 - Any protective factors to leverage?
 - Any additional risk or maintenance factors to address?
- Parents' work arrangements
 - Limited capacity/flexibility with work hours/location
 - Potential employment/financial impacts
- Rural/regional (?) location
 - Access to supports and services?



Prof. Marie Yap

'Hong': Individual and family-level considerations

- Is any supportive adult (mother, father, school staff, Dr Tran etc) aware of the challenges at school, and able to support him?
 - Hong's willingness/readiness to access support
 - Strategies to support Hong in managing these challenges
 - Strengths and protective factors to leverage?
- Mother and father
 - Their relationship with Hong
 - Their response to Hong's school attendance difficulties and the underlying factors (and any differences between parents)
 - Their own mental health and capacity to support Hong (do they need their own support too?)



Prof. Marie Yap

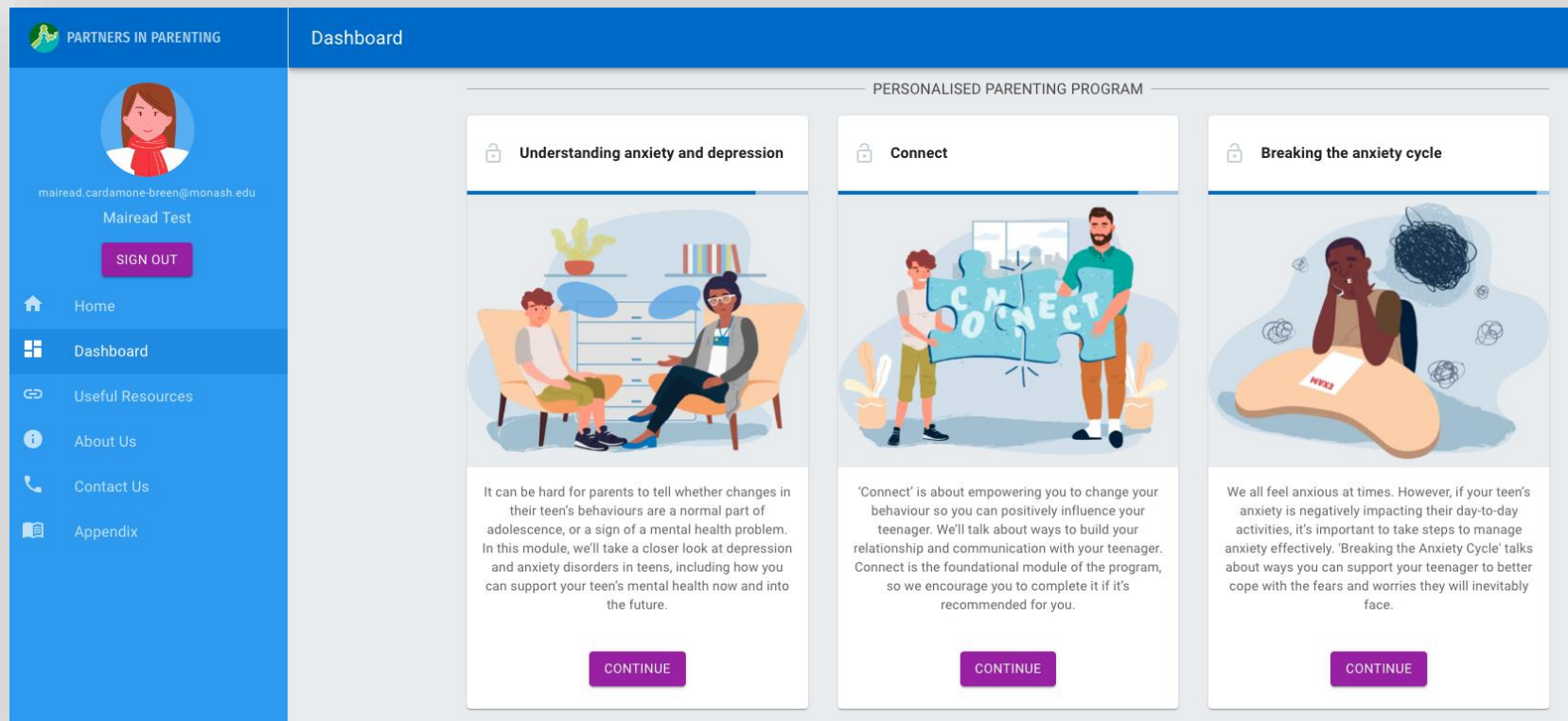
'Hong': School and community-level considerations

- The school environment
 - Any protective factors to leverage?
 - Bullying-related policies?
 - Any academic impacts of school absences to date
- Parents' work arrangements
 - Flexibility with work hours?
 - Both parents' work commitments?
- Culture/Acculturation-related factors
 - Language
 - Mental health literacy and stigma
 - Expectations about academic engagement and achievements



Prof. Marie Yap

Partners in Parenting – Education (PiP-Ed)



The screenshot shows the 'Partners in Parenting' dashboard. On the left is a blue sidebar with a user profile for 'Mairead Test' (mairead.cardamone-breen@monash.edu) and a 'SIGN OUT' button. Below the profile are navigation links: Home, Dashboard, Useful Resources, About Us, Contact Us, and Appendix. The main content area is titled 'Dashboard' and 'PERSONALISED PARENTING PROGRAM'. It features three modules, each with an illustration, a title, a brief description, and a 'CONTINUE' button:

- Understanding anxiety and depression:** Illustration of a parent and child sitting on a sofa. Text: "It can be hard for parents to tell whether changes in their teen's behaviours are a normal part of adolescence, or a sign of a mental health problem. In this module, we'll take a closer look at depression and anxiety disorders in teens, including how you can support your teen's mental health now and into the future."
- Connect:** Illustration of a parent and child holding puzzle pieces that spell 'CONNECT'. Text: "'Connect' is about empowering you to change your behaviour so you can positively influence your teenager. We'll talk about ways to build your relationship and communication with your teenager. Connect is the foundational module of the program, so we encourage you to complete it if it's recommended for you."
- Breaking the anxiety cycle:** Illustration of a person sitting at a desk with a large tangled ball of string. Text: "We all feel anxious at times. However, if your teen's anxiety is negatively impacting their day-to-day activities, it's important to take steps to manage anxiety effectively. 'Breaking the Anxiety Cycle' talks about ways you can support your teenager to better cope with the fears and worries they will inevitably face."



Prof. Marie Yap

Partners in Parenting – Education (PiP-Ed)

Understanding School Refusal



When teens refuse to attend school, the problem can be more complex than it initially appears. This module will help you develop a solid understanding of the problem, to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to support your teen to engage with school.

CONTINUE

Working together to overcome school refusal



To give your teen the best chance of overcoming school refusal, it's essential to work together with your teen, the school, and any other professionals involved. This module provides advice on how you can work together effectively to support your teen.

CONTINUE

Raising good kids into great adults



Teenagers need the adults around them to set clear boundaries and expectations for their behaviour. This module will help you to establish clear expectations that your teen is likely to follow.

CONTINUE

Calm versus conflict



Parents play an important role in helping their teenagers learn to manage conflict. 'Calm versus conflict' aims to help you manage conflict at home, to create a safe and supportive environment for your teenager.

CONTINUE

Maintaining the gains



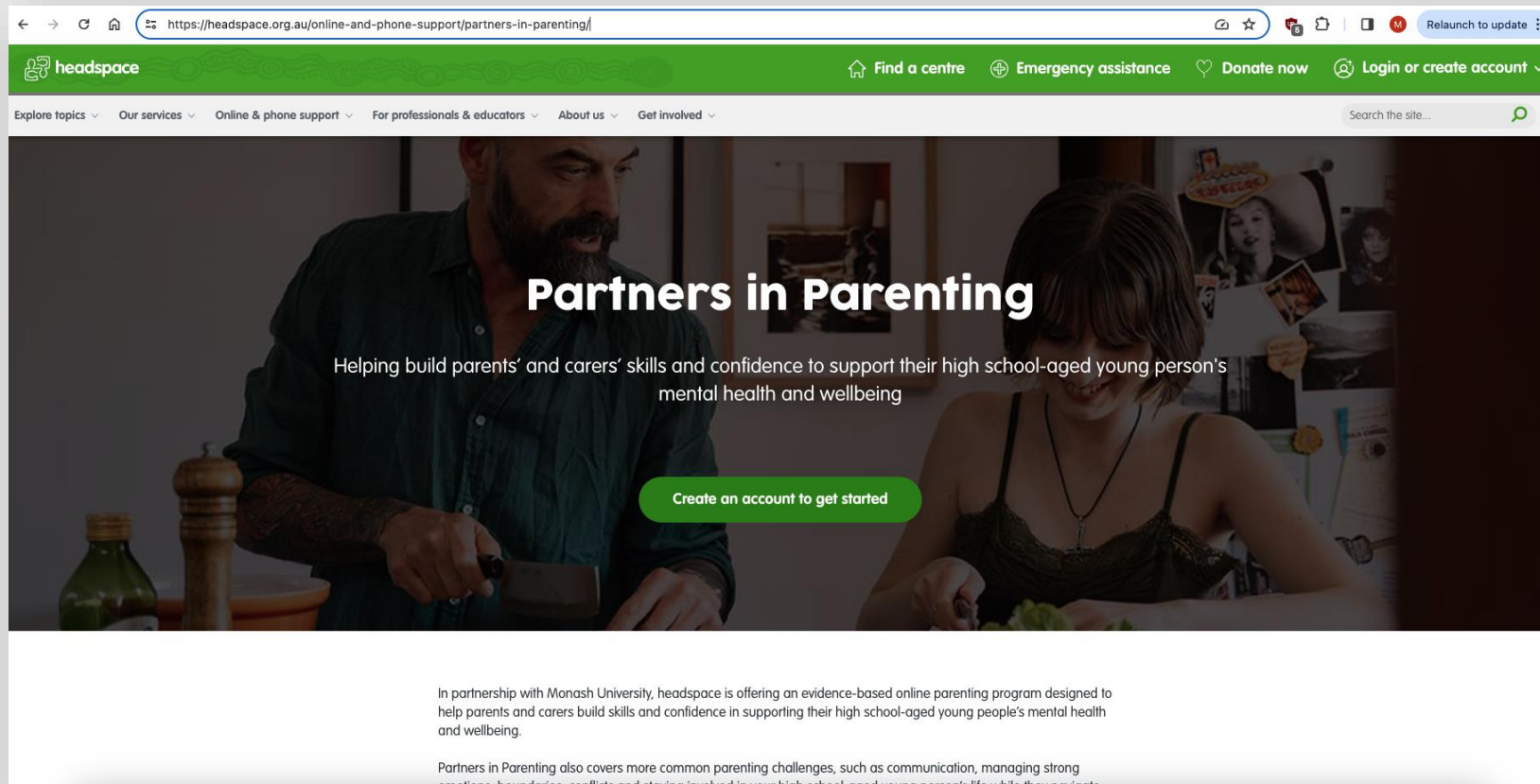
It is normal for a teenager's mental health to fluctuate. 'Maintaining the gains' is about how you can support your teen to continue looking after their mental health, even when challenges or setbacks arise.

CONTINUE



Prof. Marie Yap

Partners in Parenting @ Headspace



The screenshot shows the Headspace website page for 'Partners in Parenting'. The URL in the browser is <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/partners-in-parenting/>. The page features a green navigation bar with the Headspace logo and links for 'Find a centre', 'Emergency assistance', 'Donate now', and 'Login or create account'. Below the navigation bar, there are menu items for 'Explore topics', 'Our services', 'Online & phone support', 'For professionals & educators', 'About us', and 'Get involved'. A search bar is also present. The main content area has a dark background with a photo of a man and a woman in a kitchen. The title 'Partners in Parenting' is prominently displayed, followed by the subtitle 'Helping build parents' and carers' skills and confidence to support their high school-aged young person's mental health and wellbeing'. A green button labeled 'Create an account to get started' is centered below the text. At the bottom of the page, there is a white box containing text about the program's partnership with Monash University and its focus on evidence-based online parenting support.

Partners in Parenting

Helping build parents' and carers' skills and confidence to support their high school-aged young person's mental health and wellbeing

[Create an account to get started](#)

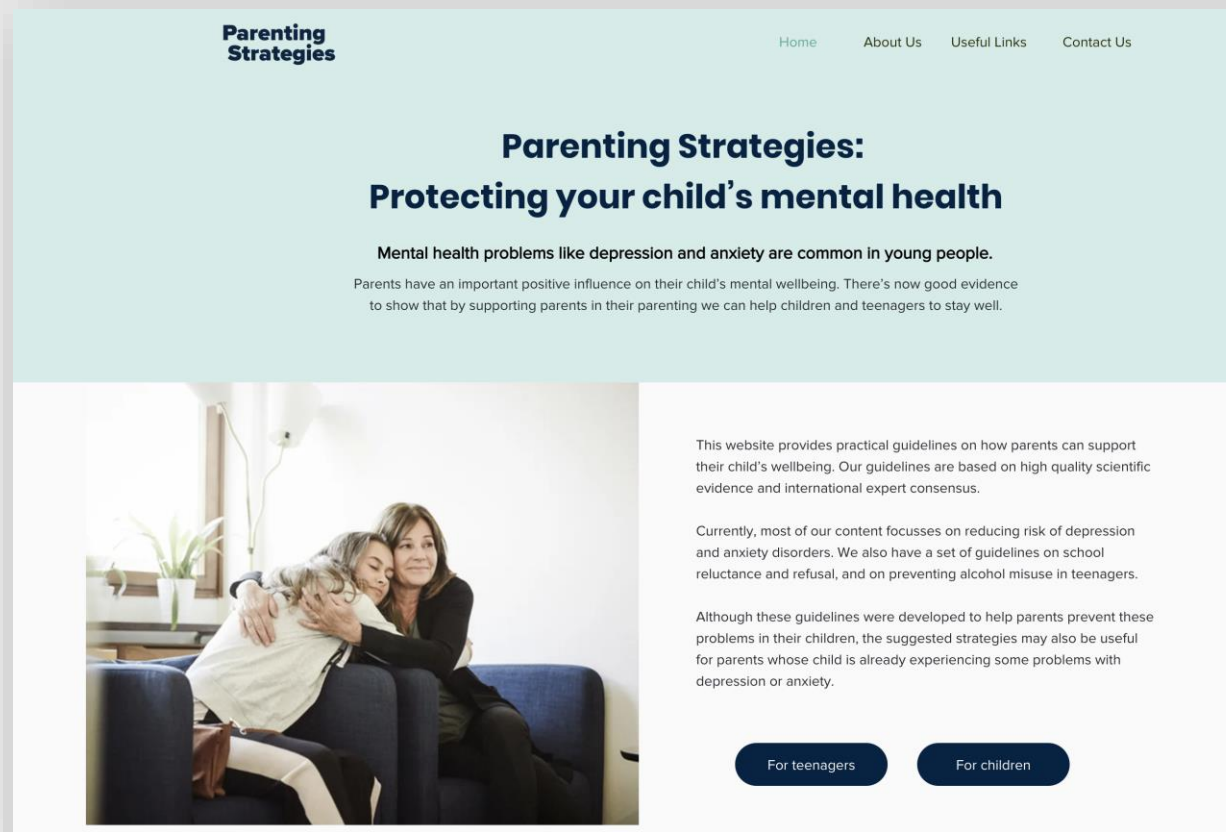
In partnership with Monash University, headspace is offering an evidence-based online parenting program designed to help parents and carers build skills and confidence in supporting their high school-aged young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Partners in Parenting also covers more common parenting challenges, such as communication, managing strong emotions, boundaries, conflicts and staying involved in your high school-aged young person's life while they navigate



Prof. Marie Yap

Parenting Strategies

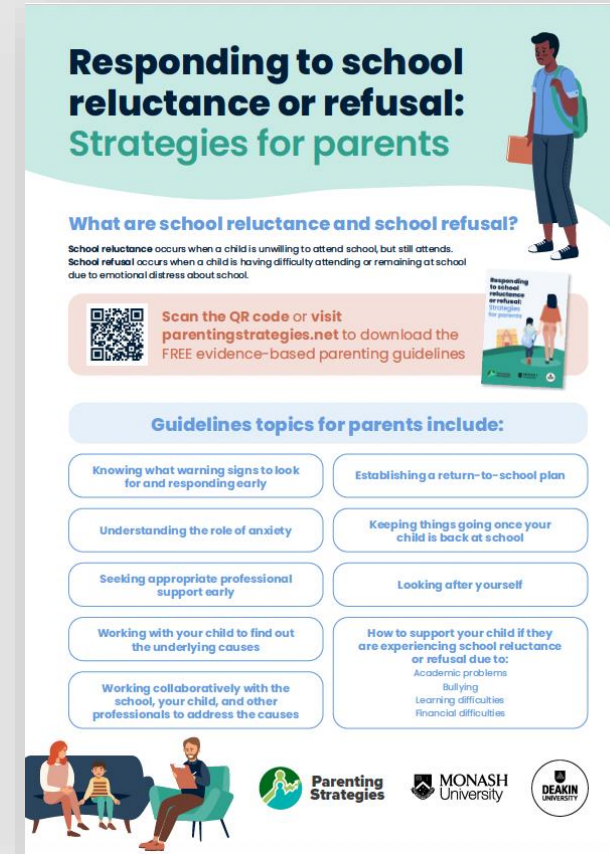


The screenshot shows a website page for 'Parenting Strategies'. The header includes the site name 'Parenting Strategies' and navigation links for 'Home', 'About Us', 'Useful Links', and 'Contact Us'. The main heading is 'Parenting Strategies: Protecting your child's mental health'. Below this, a sub-heading states: 'Mental health problems like depression and anxiety are common in young people.' A paragraph follows: 'Parents have an important positive influence on their child's mental wellbeing. There's now good evidence to show that by supporting parents in their parenting we can help children and teenagers to stay well.' The page features a photograph of a woman hugging a child on a blue sofa. To the right of the photo, there is a paragraph: 'This website provides practical guidelines on how parents can support their child's wellbeing. Our guidelines are based on high quality scientific evidence and international expert consensus.' Below this, another paragraph reads: 'Currently, most of our content focusses on reducing risk of depression and anxiety disorders. We also have a set of guidelines on school reluctance and refusal, and on preventing alcohol misuse in teenagers.' A third paragraph states: 'Although these guidelines were developed to help parents prevent these problems in their children, the suggested strategies may also be useful for parents whose child is already experiencing some problems with depression or anxiety.' At the bottom of the text area, there are two dark blue buttons: 'For teenagers' and 'For children'.



Prof. Marie Yap

Parenting Strategies



Prof. Marie Yap

Thank you for your participation



A Statement of Attendance for this webinar will be available via your MHPN portal account in two weeks.

Each participant will be sent a link to the online resources associated with this webinar within one week.

Please share your valuable feedback by

Clicking the  button below

OR

Visit surveymonkey.com/r/schoolrefusalMHPN from your internet browser

OR

Scan the QR Code



Thank you for your participation



Upcoming Webinars:

Working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care through a culturally safe framework on *17th April @ 7:15pm.*

Supporting the mental health of a neurodivergent person with co-occurring Autism and ADHD on *26th June @ 7:15pm.*

Please share your valuable feedback by

Clicking the button  below

OR

Visit surveyMonkey.com/r/schoolrefusalMHPN from your internet browser

Scan the QR Code



Thank you for your participation.

Good evening.



Please share your valuable feedback by

Clicking the **Complete Feedback Survey** button below

OR

Visit surveymonkey.com/r/schoolrefusalMHPN from your internet browser

Scan the QR Code

