

# Specific phobias in children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities: SPIRIT, an adaptation and feasibility study

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## Plain language summary

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## Plain language summary

This study was about children and adolescents who have moderate to severe learning disabilities and specific phobia. This study had two parts. In the first part, we worked with parents of young people with learning disabilities and therapists to develop a treatment for specific phobia in children and adolescents with moderate to severe learning disabilities. We also collected information about what treatment young people were currently getting. To do this, we conducted a national (United Kingdom) survey of parents/carers who have a child with a learning disability and a phobia, along with a survey of health professionals who work with children with learning disabilities.

Together with parents and therapists, we developed a treatment for specific phobia in children and adolescents with moderate to severe learning disabilities. We collected information about what treatments young people received for specific phobia and found that many do not receive any treatment for their specific phobia.

In the second part, we wanted to find out whether the treatment was acceptable to parents and therapists. To do this, we tried out the treatment with 15 children and adolescents. We had difficulties getting people involved in the study due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We got enough people involved to help us to work out whether the treatment was acceptable to parents and therapists. We interviewed parents and therapists to find out how they felt about the treatment and being part of the study. We also talked to therapists to ask them what they thought about the treatment. Parents told us that they liked being involved in the study and found the treatment helped them to help their children. Parents and therapists suggested some changes to the treatment to help improve it in the future. It was recommended that a larger study should be completed.

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## This article

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