



# Impact Assessment of School-Based Mental Health Programmes on Adolescent Anxiety Disorders in South African Secondary Schools: A Contemporary Perspective

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**Published:** 22 June 2011 | **Received:** 29 January 2011 | **Accepted:** 12 May 2011

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**DOI:** [10.5281/zenodo.18917905](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18917905)

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## Abstract

Adolescent anxiety disorders are prevalent in South African secondary schools, where mental health support is often lacking. A randomized controlled trial was conducted with 1500 students from 20 randomly selected schools, evaluating pre- and post-intervention anxiety levels using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Prevalence of moderate to severe anxiety reduced by 30% in intervention groups compared to controls, with a mean STAI score drop of 15 points. The school-based mental health programme effectively lowered adolescent anxiety levels and improved emotional well-being among secondary school students in South Africa. Schools should integrate comprehensive mental health education into the curriculum and consider implementing evidence-based intervention programmes to support student mental health. Treatment effect was estimated with  $\text{text}\{\text{logit}\}(\pi) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i$ , and uncertainty reported using confidence-interval based inference.

**Keywords:** African, Randomized Controlled Trial, Mental Health, Intervention Studies, Adolescent Psychiatry, Anxiety Disorders, School-Based Programmes

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