



Social Science Translated



## Assessing Uptake of Digital Tools in Clinical Practice

- Social Science Translated / AutismCRC
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### Introduction

Over 2 decades, a PhD project initially utilising physical resources, was developed and enhanced, ultimately evolving into a digital health platform in 2021.

It has gamified learning, data tracking, interactive group sessions, school resources, user engagement tools, and connects children with their support networks to foster social and emotional development in neurodivergent children and improve parent-child relationships.

To assist various users and stakeholders (i.e. clinicians, educators, funders, policy makers, service-level decision-makers, researchers) and ongoing program improvement, enhanced real-time progress visualisation and multi-level outcomes analysis were added.

### Research Snapshot

1. Beaumont, R., & Sofronoff, K. (2008). A multi-component social skills intervention for children with Asperger syndrome: The Junior Detective Training Program. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(7), 743-753.
2. Gasparro, S., et al. (2023). The Effect of the Secret Agent Society Group Program on Parent-Teacher Agreement Regarding Children's Social Emotional Functioning. *Behavioral Sciences* 2023, 13, 322.
3. Lee, V., et al. (2022). Adaptation of Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Autistic Children During the Pandemic: A Mixed-Methods Program Evaluation. *Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 7(1), 76-93.
4. MacEvilly, D., et al. (2024). Enhancing children's emotional regulation and social communication through group intervention – evidence of impact in an Irish outpatient Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy*, 1-21.
5. Temkin, A. B., et al. (2022). Secret Agent Society: A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Transdiagnostic Youth Social Skills Group Treatment. *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*.
6. Weiss, J., et al. (2019). A randomized waitlist-controlled trial of cognitive behavior therapy to improve emotion regulation in children with autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 59(1), 1180-1191.

### Digitisation Project Vision

The digitisation project envisioned providing service-level data for supervisors/managers and increasing ease of program evaluation projects.

The program-wide and service-level use of end-user satisfaction and program outcomes data were expected to inform both 'on-the-ground' clinical practice and software improvements over time.

#### Software Development Objectives

- Operate under the guidance of the advisory group
- Remain true to the evidence-based clinical best practice
- Generate practical resources for community implementation
- Reduce barriers and increase efficiencies in assessment administration
- Automate scoring and reporting



### Methods

- The digitised program and skill monitoring tool launched in January 2021, followed a six-step co-designed process.
- Automated assessments questionnaires were added 12 months later, monitored over 12-18 months.
- Parents, teachers, and children reported program benefits and satisfaction through automated assessment.
- Ongoing evaluation data sources include provider demographics, professional training course feedback, user data analysis, clinical outcomes, service and family feedback, and university program evaluations.

### Demonstration Options

1 Visit Tech Demo on Saturday 18th May



2 QR code 1: Watch recorded webinar:



3 QR code 2: Watch Small Group Software Trailer:



### Results (Jan 2021 - Nov 2023)

7 Countries (Aus, NZ, USA, Can, UK, Asia)

193 SAS Providers (both in-person and telehealth service delivery)

1,364 professionals

Psychologists (21%), Behaviour Analysts (13%), Educators (23%), Occupational Therapists (12%), Speech Pathologists (12%) & Social Workers (15%)

6,113 Children

5,764 Mentors / supporting adults

1,890 Groups commenced

16,509 Cadet Club Meetings

6,022 Parent Group Meetings

#### Favourite SAS skills

Emotion Recognition | **Emotion Regulation** | Social Skills | **Social Problem Solving**

#### Child Self-Reported Program Satisfaction Correlated with Parent-Reported Child Satisfaction

- After 12 months of automated assessments, **78%** of **542** post-program child surveys self-reported liking the program a lot, correlating with **70%** of parent surveys reporting their child's opinion.



[www.secretagentsociety.com](http://www.secretagentsociety.com)

### Child Singular and Co-Occuring Diagnoses

**Autism (66.9%)** **ADHD (41.9%)**  
**Anxiety (46.6%)** **no diagnoses (29%)**  
**Intellectual Disability (5%)** **other diagnoses (28.7%)**

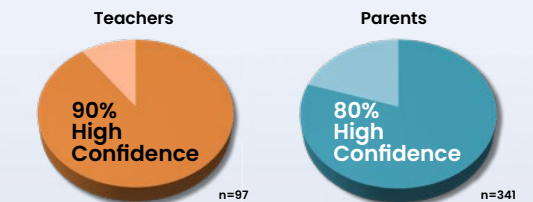
#### Usage of Collaborative Practice Tools

- **1508** of the children used their collaborative skills practice tools together with their adult mentors.



#### Adult Mentor (Parent and Teachers) Confidence

- Both Parents and Teachers reported high confidence in supporting the child/student in their social-emotional development.



### Conclusions

- Uptake and program usage data indicate positive perceived benefits and feasibility of the clinician-led digitised program.
- This further supports evidence from effectiveness data indicating clinical equivalency.
- Future data exploration and community consultation will continue to enhance the program for accessibility and social validity assessments of program innovation.

#### Core Strengths

- Combination of videos and interactive process
- Flexible completion due to self-paced training
- Structured and easy to navigate training platform