Addressing school refusal among adolescents with ASD

Key learnings shared by the LANS team

Cathelijne Venrooij, Manager of education
Judith Dona, Manager of education
Hilde Hermes, MSc. School Psychologist
Evelyne Karel, MSc. Mental Health Psychologist
Cynthia Defourny, MSc. Mental Health Psychologist





Getting to know each other

• www.menti.com

• Code: 82322713





Introduction

What do you think: does school refusal occurs more often in students with autism?



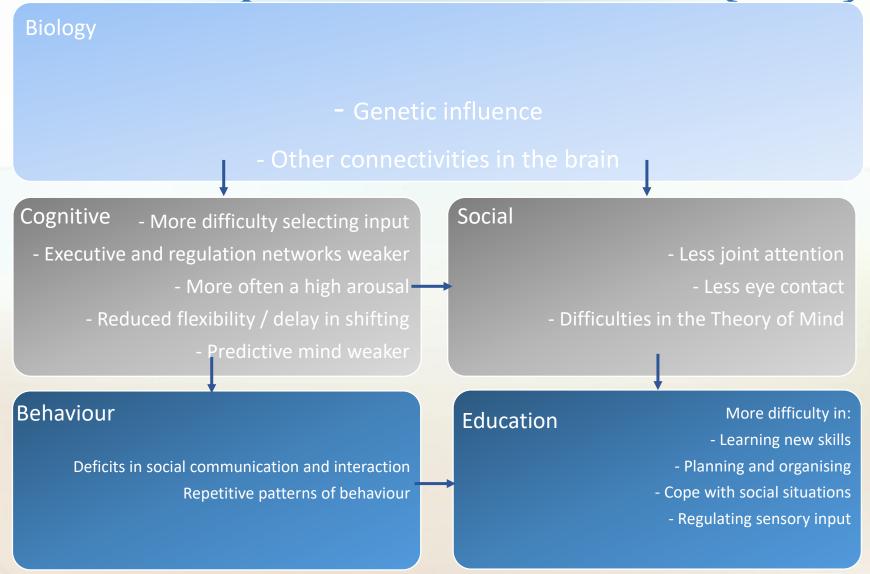
School refusal and autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

www.menti.com

Code: 82322713



Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)





All students go to school (LANS)

De Berkenschutse

EDUCATION



YOUTH CARE

BYEVIE

Focus LANS

- All students go to school
- Reintegration in school in their own classroom
- Evidence based @school treatmentprotocol (Heyne & Sauter, 2013)
- Treatment for students and their parents
- Collaboration science-education-health care







Main points LANS

Registration

Underlying factors

LANS

Starting quick and personalised

Close collaboration





Pull factors

- Predictable environment
- Less internal motivation
- Own choices for daily activities
- Closeness to parents
- Gaming/phone use



Push factors

- Problems with social interaction
- Being bullied
- Pressure of school tests
- Problems with organisation of De Berkenschutse Centrum voor Onderwijsexpertise

Let's meet Nora!





Education - ASD

- De Berkenschutse
 - Special education: ASD and long-term sick students
 - 360 students in 29 groups with the ability to achieve a diploma
 - Total of pupils at this school;
 700 pupils from ages 4 to 22
 - School transport
 - Aim for diploma
 - Extended first school years (4 instead of 3)





Adjustments at De Berkenschutse

- Small classes (12 students)
- Extra (work)space near the classroom
- Teacher comes to classroom
- 2 mentors per class
- Student guidance
 - Phone in case of a problem
 - Individual guidance
- No class dropout





All students go to school (LANS) and De Berkenschutse

Pick up on first signs of absence at school/start as school drop out

Internal Care consultation

Contact LANS

collaborate to define support needs

advice for registration LANS by parents and student

Start LANS



Treatment and coordination with education

- What adjustments can school make?
 - Make a schedule with
 - How many school days or half-days
 - Which subjects or adjusted schedule (other than that of the class)
 - What to do with homework, tests, breaks?
 - Do you plan moments of rest at school?
 - Involving student counselor to monitor the progress (tests, attendance, continuity)
 - Evaluation every 2 weeks
 - What expectations do school, parents and students have?



Instruction

- Make groups of 3 persons
- Work together to make a schedule to build-up the school attendance

Week 1 + 2

	Monday.	Luesdax	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lu 1					
Lu 2					
Break					
Lu 3					
Lu 4					
Break					
Lu 5					
Lu 6					
Lu 7					

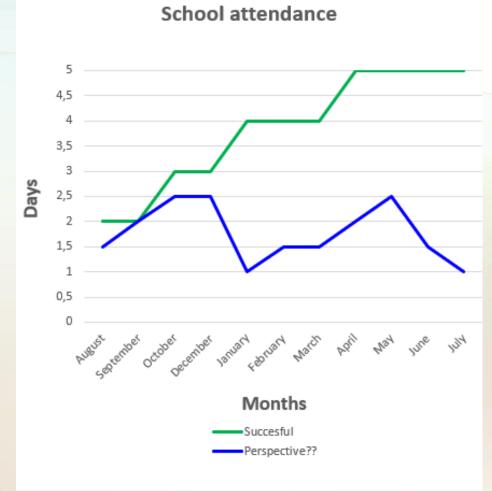
Week 3 + 4

	Monday.	Luesdax	Wednesday	Ihursday	Friday
Lu 1					
Lu 2					
pauze					
Lu 3					
Lu 4					
pauze					
Lu 5					
Lu 6					
Lu 7					



Monitoring school attendance

- Is the help provided enough to succeed?
- Is transition to next year possible?
- Is the level attainable?



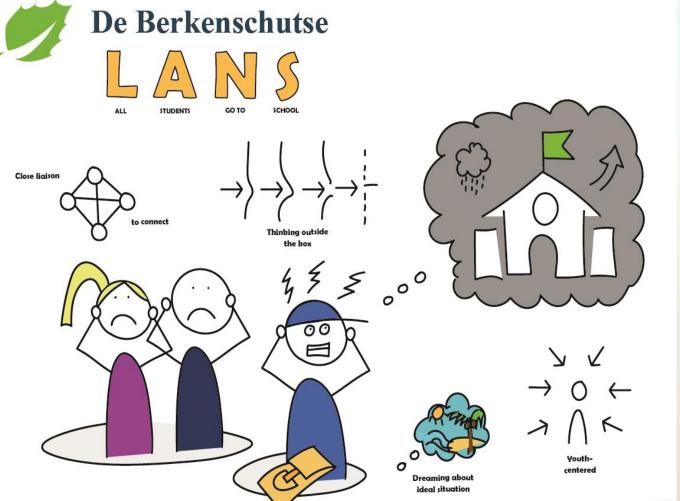


Take a break!

Back in 10 minutes



Stand in line in space



Is education or treatment leading?



ASD & School Refusal

Verbal/ psychical refusal in primary school

Partial / complete absenteeism in secundary school

More More deficits More socially withdrawn and in initiating impaired tasks or ideas depressive symptoms Less problem-Less solving socially strategies motivated **Impaired** planning / ASS and SR Executive organising and **Function** shifting Additional More difficult problems like to treat game-addiction Less willing to change Problems in De Berkenschutse

social contact

Centrum voor Onderwijsexpertise

Munkhaugen et al., 2017; Munkhaugen et al 2019; Melin et al., 2022

Key learnings LANS school refusal and ASD

- Ensure that both intervention and education are fully alligned
- Be aware of the students' expectations
- Identify the student's social motivation and be aware of individual differences
- Pay attention to lifestyle like sleep, nutrition, exercise and being outdoors
- Make use of exposure practices to rebuild school attendance.
- Train students to recognise and cope with sensory processing sensitivities



Key learnings LANS school refusal and ASD

- Identify executive functioning deficits, such as planning and (self) organising at an early stage
- Enhance the problem-solving skills of students and families
- Be flexible increasing school attendance and explore together with the student, parents and educational team what works best
- Guide both parents and the educational team in how to support as well as direct the student

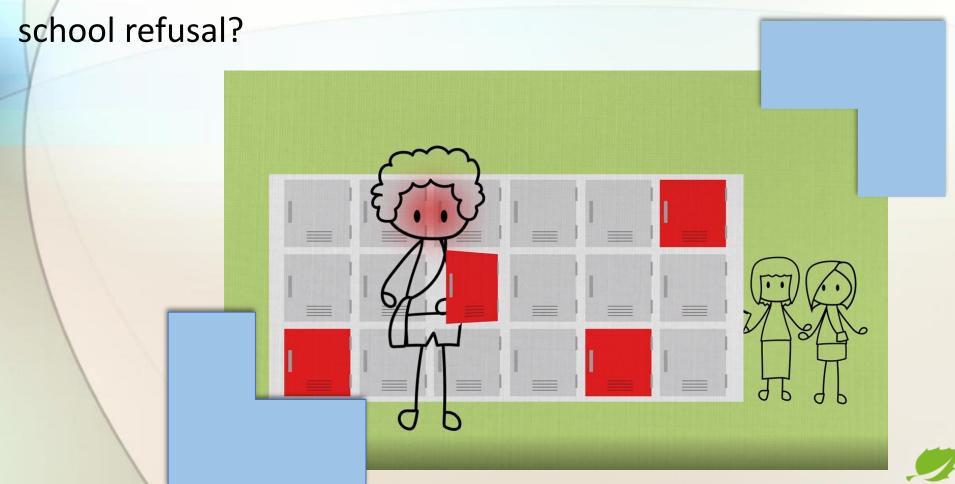
Exercise: How do you work with these key learnings at your school in working with students with school refusal and ASD?

Discussion in your group about the key learning



Together we create motion

How do we create motion together in working with students with ASD and





What is your take home-message?

