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Social Phobia Program

Nova University

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School Phobia Program

NOVA UNIVERSITY
School Phobia Program

Cynthia G. Last, Ph.D., Director
Kim Sterner, Program Coordinator

We are pleased to announce the opening of the SCHOOL PHOBIA PROGRAM. The School Phobia Program, located in Coral Springs, offers outpatient diagnostic assessment and treatment services for school-age children (5-18) with school attendance problems that are due to anxiety or fear.

Anxiety-based school refusal (School Phobia) is a problem that torments many students (ages 5-18). These youngsters avoid going to school because of fear/anxiety, which, in extreme cases, can be of panic proportion. In almost all instances, the fear and avoidance behavior is related to separation anxiety (i.e., anxiety about being separated from a major attachment figure, usually the mother) or some aspect of the school environment (i.e., an irrational or excessive fear of a social or physical component of the school environment).

Regardless of the source of the fear, anxiety-based school refusal can be eliminated through repeated exposure to the school environment, that is, school attendance. Return to school is approached in a gradual manner, beginning with tasks that generate relatively low levels of anxiety and fear, slowly increasing task difficulty until full school attendance is achieved.

Comprehensive psychological evaluations are conducted to assess child functioning and formula treatment plans. Treatment typically includes a behavioral therapy program aimed at increasing school attendance. Adjunct pharmacotherapy (medication) is available, when indicated, through our medical team.
Symptoms of school phobia may include one or more of the following:

- Excessive fear/anxiety about attending school
- Prolonged absenteeism from school
- Stomachaches or headaches on school days
- Frequent trips to the nurse’s office
- Calling home repeatedly during school hours
- Difficulty falling asleep or nightmares on school nights
- Crying on school mornings

The presence of one or more of these symptoms, on a consistent basis, may indicate the presence of School Phobia.

For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please contact Kim Sterner, Program Coordinator, at (305) 753-7044.

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