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## Effectiveness of self-esteem groups for mainstream teenagers with special needs

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**Introduction:** Research has shown that children with special needs have challenges with socialization and self-esteem. To support the child's development, pediatric occupational therapists in National University Hospital System (NUHS) Singapore conducted self-esteem groups.

**Aim:** To investigate the effectiveness of occupational therapy self-esteem group conducted for adolescents.

**Methods:** A pre-post intervention design was used. Data was collected via a 24-question self-rated 3-scaled questionnaire on self-esteem, adapted from talk about relationships. 15 children were recruited. 2 runs of 5 group sessions and 1 individual review session (1 month post intervention) were conducted. Qualitative feedback was gathered through open-ended questionnaires.

**Results:** 15 children completed all pre and post-intervention measure, 60% shown an improvement in self-esteem scores, 6.67% displayed no change, 33.33% shown a decrease in self-esteem scores. Further analysis revealed a negative correlation ( $R^2=0.414$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) between the decreased in post-intervention self-esteem scores with the increase in age of children who are 12 years 6 months and above. Awareness of self-esteem issues for the older children could likely cause them to rate their self-esteem lower after the intervention. Qualitative feedback gathered that children are keen to maintain the friendship. Parents reported an increase in confidence level for the children and suggested future booster sessions.

**Conclusion:** Findings supported the implementation of the self-esteem group with positive outcomes. Social relationships were developed and maintained with the scaffolding of interaction facilitated during the group. Future research should examine the prospects for generalization and maintenance of the relationships formed during the group.

### Biography

Tan Jiaxuan is a senior Occupational Therapist practicing in the National University Hospital Singapore. Her clinical experience includes working with children with the complex medical, developmental and physical conditions. In addition to her clinical expertise, she is the Team Leader for the Special Education Project for children with special needs in Medan, Indonesia. She is focused on a parent-therapist collaboration using a client centered approach, as the consistent support from home/school is very important in a child's progress. She has also presented in conferences which include the Perinatal Mental Health Conference (Marce Society), Public Health Conference, National Occupational Therapy Conference.

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