FRIENDS for LIFE- Child Group Treatment for Anxiety
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

GROUP FOCUS: FRIENDS for Life group treatment program (focus on treatment of anxiety in children ages 8-11)

TIME and DURATION: Mondays 4:30-6:00pm; 10 sessions plus 1 pre-group parent session

DATES: Parent session: Monday February 26, 2018;
Child sessions: Monday March 5 – May 21, 2018 (No session March 12, or April 2)
*Note change of dates

PLACE: University of Waterloo Centre for Mental Health Research (UW CMHR), PAS 1401

GROUP LEADERS: Experienced therapists-in-training from amongst our roster of senior doctoral students and predoctoral residents in Clinical Psychology

SUPERVISOR: Elizabeth Stevens, Ph.D., C. Psych.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CLIENTS: 8

DESCRIPTION:
The FRIENDS for Life treatment program is an empirically supported group treatment, designed to build resilience and reduce anxiety in school-aged children, ages 8 through 11 (grade 4-5). Considerable empirical support has been amassing regarding the efficacy of the FRIENDS for Life program, including endorsement by the World Health Organization (2004) as an effective program for the prevention and reduction of anxiety symptoms in school-aged youth.

Children in this group will be taught skills through engaging in games and activities with their peers in a fun and supportive environment. This program maintains a focus on confronting and coping with feared situations, building strengths, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Areas to be addressed in the 10 child sessions include:

- Understanding emotions in one’s self and others
- Recognizing body clues associated with anxiety and other negative emotions
- Building strategies to help regulate strong emotions such as anxiety and low mood
- Confronting anxiety-provoking situations within a safe and supportive environment
- Empathy, helping others, and being kind
- Problem-solving
- Making healthy relationship choices (e.g., forming and maintaining long-term friendships)

An additional parents-only session, as well as weekly take-home activities, will provide parents with support and skills related to supporting their child in confronting and coping with worries and fears.

WHOM TO REFER: Children who self-report symptoms of anxiety (e.g., excessive worrying, anxiety in social or performance situations, school refusal) or whose parents or teachers report a disruption in
the child’s functioning due to anxiety, and who would be amenable to group therapy. *Parents and children must be able to commit in advance to attending therapy sessions at the stated times and dates. Pre-group assessments will begin in January 2018.*

**HOW TO REFER:** Parents of potential clients should contact Maureen Stafford at the UW CMHR at 519-888-4567 x33842 and should say explicitly that they are interested in the FRIENDS for Life Group.

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** Parents who express interest in enrolling their child in the group will be contacted by UW CMHR staff to arrange a more detailed assessment to determine their eligibility for the group. Non-eligible child clients will be referred to the individual waitlist at the UW CMHR. Upon entrance to the group, clients will be asked to enter a research study approved by UW Ethics in which they will complete self-report questionnaires on their symptoms (with all identifying information kept strictly confidential). The fee for group treatment is on an income based scale (ranging from $45-$85 per session, for 10 sessions, no fee for parent session) plus the cost of their child’s activity book (price to be determined at time of ordering, estimated $15-20).