



BLOCK BUILDING
THERAPIES

DRIVER ANXIETY PROGRAM

Improve driver confidence, learn strategies to manage anxiety and return to functional driving.

What is driving anxiety?

Anxiety can present itself in a variety of ways and can stem from negative or traumatic experiences. Driving anxiety occurs when one experiences anxiety or nervousness while driving or when thinking about driving. Driving anxiety can interfere with the ability to complete activities of daily living and can feel like it is controlling life choices. Avoiding social activities, grocery shopping or even going to work are some ways driving anxiety may be having an impact.

Program Overview

The Driver Anxiety Program uses a two-part assessment of the client's anxiety as it relates to driving. It is a comprehensive evaluation, involving both in-clinic and on-road assessment.

Following the two-part assessment, a detailed report summarizing treatment recommendations is provided. The report includes an individualized rehabilitation plan, including in-clinic sessions with an Occupational Therapist to learn symptom management strategies and on-road lessons with a Driving Instructor to habituate these strategies when driving.



Part 1

A 90-minute in-clinic driving screen completed by an Occupational Therapist that includes:

- clinical interview to assess medical history, ongoing treatment, self-awareness and driving status.
- physical assessments to evaluate range of motion, coordination, sensation and tolerance.
- cognitive assessments to evaluate visual and perceptual abilities.

Part 2

A 90-minute in-vehicle assessment completed with an Occupational Therapist and an experienced Driving Instructor with use of a dual-controlled vehicle. During this on-road component, the client will be observed in a variety of driving scenarios to assess their judgment and decision-making abilities, as well as their ability to utilize strategies in stressful situations.

Eligibility Criteria

Clients must hold a valid driver's license and have no medical restrictions related to driving.

Driving Anxiety Program FAQs

Do I need a vehicle to complete this program?

No vehicle is required to complete the Driving Anxiety Program. The in-vehicle portion of the initial assessment, as well as in-vehicle treatment sessions are completed in our certified driving instructor's dual control vehicle.

Do I need to have a driver's license to participate in this program?

Yes. Clients must hold a valid driver's license and have no medical restrictions related to driving to be a suitable candidate. This program is not geared towards teaching clients how to drive, but rather to assist clients in learning strategies to manage anxiety related to driving and improve driver confidence. We are not affiliated with MPI driver fitness and do not assess whether someone remains fit to keep their driver's license.

Am I suitable for this program if I am not currently driving?

Yes! Through the premise of Exposure Therapy, we work with clients to address vehicle anxiety as a whole, including both passenger and driver anxiety.

What is Driving Anxiety?

Driving anxiety occurs when someone experiences anxiety or nervousness while driving or when thinking about driving. Driving anxiety can interfere with one's ability to complete activities of daily living and can feel like it is controlling life choices. Clients often experience driver anxiety after a traumatic event or after having refrained from driving for a period of time. The goal of the Driving Anxiety Program is to use driving exposure to assist clients in returning to functional driving so that they can actively engage in meaningful daily activities.

What is Driving Exposure?

Driving exposure helps clients improve their ability to differentiate between safe and unsafe situations. When someone experiences anxiety about specific things, such as driving, they often avoid those situations. While this can reduce the discomfort in the short term, simply avoiding driving is not a great long-term solution. With help from the treating Occupational Therapist, we aim to interrupt the cycle of fear in order to allow clients to better recognize which beliefs are accurate and which have become overrun by emotions.

Why do I need support from an Occupational Therapist?

Occupational Therapy practitioners are uniquely positioned with a practice philosophy and foundational skills to effectively address the range of driving and community mobility needs to support a productive and active life. We are trained to analyze client factors such as skills and deficits; we consider client needs and desires for meaningful activity; and we assess and adapt environments to enable better client participation.

Occupational Therapists have expertise in enabling others to attain their desired level of engagement in life's meaningful occupations, such as driving. Driving promotes community mobility and is a method of maintaining social networks and independence. An understanding of the relationship between the person (you), the occupation (driving), and the environment positions Occupational Therapists to provide client-centred driver rehabilitation programs with a focus on engagement and community participation.

For further information or to book an appointment, please contact:

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Referral forms for new assessments are also available on our website: www.blockbuilding.ca

