The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Single-Session Interventions (SSI)

Most people with mental health needs cannot access treatment; among those who do, ***many access services only once.***

While efforts are needed to improve engagement and continuity of care, this also raises an important question: ***What can realistically be achieved in a single encounter?***

What are SSI?

Structured, theory-driven interventions designed to deliver a meaningful therapeutic impact within one session.

How do they work?

SSI target specific mechanisms of change, such as:

- Maladaptive beliefs
- Low self-efficacy
- Avoidance patterns

Within one session, they:

1. Provide targeted psychoeducation
2. Introduce a clear, actionable framework
3. Engage the individual in active reflection or application



Evidence from randomised trials indicates that SSIs can produce small-to-moderate improvements in youth mental health outcomes.

Join ACAMH's workshop "Single-Session Interventions for Children and Young People: Evidence, Clinical Skills, and Best Practice" on 21 January 2027, 1.00–5.00 pm UK time.