



Difficult and Disruptive Students

Brief Review of Selected

Diagnostic Characteristics

Prepared by:
Bruce M. Gale, Ph.D.
BehaviorTech Solutions Inc.

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Published on www.lorman.com - July 2017

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Difficult and Disruptive Students

Written by Bruce M. Gale, PhD, bruce@bgalephd.com

Brief Review of Selected Diagnostic Characteristics:

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Defiance - refusing to comply with adult requests or becoming *argumentative*
- Negativity - chronic feelings of resentment, blaming others for problems, deliberately annoying others, being vindictive
- Reactivity - "hair-trigger" emotional responses and tantrums over minor events
- Other characteristics: trouble sharing, waiting their turn, hold grudges, can become aggressive toward peers, and complain that "things are not fair," difficulty making or maintaining friendships, other students often avoid them
- Academic problems are common because their behavior typically results in reduced learning time and positive teacher interaction.
- Under 5 years old: It is important to distinguish between common transient developmentally expected behaviors that may include oppositionality from more chronic presentations. Many do NOT go on to develop more serious symptoms.
- Must consider presence of ADHD symptoms. More than ½ of kids with ADHD also meet criteria for ODD.

ADHD (Inattentive type) – [Note: There is also hyperactive type and combined type]

- Doesn't pay close attention to details or makes careless errors in schoolwork
- Doesn't seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Avoids tasks that require sustained concentration
- Loses things needed for tasks
- Easily distracted and forgetful

OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)

- No impairment in ability to communicate, but needs to have rituals or routines that they cannot change in any way.
- If the routine is changed in any way, child will experience anxiety
- Likely to have difficulty with fantasy and the give and take of social interactions
- Transitions can be very difficult
- Child may constantly have worries, fears are very unlikely to come true
 - Night time and death
 - Body and health concerns for himself and significant others
 - Preoccupation with public disasters
 - Critical of own appearance

Anxiety – Various Types

- School Refusal-may be a wish to be at home
- Separation Anxiety Disorder-fears something will happen if away from parents
- Social Anxiety Disorder-social speaking
- Simple Phobias-specific fears
- Panic Disorder-fear of dying, losing control
 - Abrupt experience of intense fear or discomfort
 - Accompanied by several physical symptoms (e.g., breathlessness, chest pain)

Generalized Anxiety

- Characterized by excessive worrying that is nonproductive
- Somatic symptoms common, e.g., headaches, lumps in throat, tense stomach

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

- Intense reliving and reactions following a significantly stressful situation
- Depression can accompany these symptoms

Autistic Spectrum

- Reduced ability to use language effectively

- Executive functioning skills typically markedly impaired
- Doesn't show awareness of effect of behavior upon environment
- Highly rigid – sees things in “black and white”
- Misperceives situations
- Compulsions and urges common – stopping them from engaging in these can trigger events
- Marked difficulty managing stress

Depression

- Moods can be variable, okay while engaged in activities, but moody and negative other times.
- Lots of self-blame
- Highly self-aware, painfully self-conscious
- Relate much better to older kids, less so to peers
- Often overly compliant, too cooperative and well-behaved

Thinking Disorders/Psychosis

- Initially student seems reasonable and verbal, but as story continues, “holes” develop
- Intrusive thoughts, may seem like OCD but fears are even more irrational and reactions can be extreme (e.g., of the microwave)
- Misperceives reality, often accuses of “lying”
- Marked distrust of others

- Very quick to become angry, slow to calm, holds a grudge
- Typically requires medication in addition to other treatments

Mild Intellectual Disability

- Global cognitive functioning is significantly below the general population by approximately 2 standard deviations, equaling a standard score of 50-55 to 7-75
- Similar deficits in adaptive functioning as measured by a standardized measure
- Has deficits in at least several of the following areas: judgment, money management, self-care, reading comprehension, budgeting skills, ability to engage in meaningful conversations, hold a job, ability to manage own medical situation.
- Judgment is extremely concrete; challenges with abstract reasoning

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