Understanding Oppositional Defiant Disorder in the School Setting

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Overview of Training

- Definition of ODD: Signs, symptoms, DSM IV criteria
- Causes of ODD
- Risk-factors
- Developmental factors
- Strategies for working with ODD students in the classroom
Oppositional students will be able to meet your expectations in the classroom setting without battles.
Video Segment

What do these kids look like?
What is ODD?

- Ongoing pattern of uncooperative, defiant, hostile and annoying behavior towards people in authority

- Behavior disrupts child’s normal daily activities, both within family and at school
Video Segment

Clip from Thirteen or Daria
DSM-IV Criteria

A pattern of negativistic, hostile, and defiant behavior lasting at least six months during which four or more of the following are present:

1. Often loses temper
2. Often argues with adults
3. Often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults’ requests or rules
4. Often deliberately annoys people
5. Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
6. Is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
7. Is often angry and resentful
8. Is often spiteful and vindictive
The disturbance in behavior causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.
How often is often?

Has occurred at all during the last three months
- spiteful and vindictive
- blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior

Occurs at least twice a week
- is touchy or easily annoyed by others
- loses temper
- argues with adults
- actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules

Occurs at least four times per week
- is angry and resentful
- deliberately annoys people
Symptoms of ODD

- Repeated temper tantrums
- Excessive arguing with adults
- Refusal to comply with requests and rules
- Attempts to annoy or upset others and/or easily upset by others
- Blames others for his/her mistakes
Symptoms (cont.)

- Frequent outbursts of anger and resentment
- Spiteful and seeks revenge
- Frequent swearing and obscene language
- Says mean and hateful things when upset
ODD or Conduct Disorder?

ODD may be a precursor of a conduct disorder

Conduct Disorder: A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major society rules are violated.
How do they differ?

- CD is a more severe form of ODD
- Severe ODD can lead to CD
- Issues of Safety main difference
“I said give me the smiley face sticker NOW!”
Two theories of ODD:

- **Developmental theory**: ODD is a result of incomplete development.

- **Learning theory**: ODD comes as a response to negative interactions between parent and child.
Oppositional behaviors are not a function of students choosing to act in a defiant and non-compliant manner. Inability to meet adult expectations is due to a delay in the development of the skills of flexibility, adaptability, and frustration tolerance, or significant difficulty applying these skills when they are most needed.
Causes of ODD

Three main causes:

1. Environment
2. Genetics
3. Biological/Medical problems
Environmental Causes

- Not one clear cause.
- The usual pattern is for problems to begin between ages 1-3 years of age.
- Dysfunctional family life
Environmental Causes . . .

If the mother is smoking during her pregnancy, the child is 2-3 times more likely to end up with ODD or CD when he is older.
Genetic Causes

- A vulnerability to ODD may be inherited.
- Many children with ODD have close family members with mental illnesses including mood disorders, anxiety disorders and personality disorders.
Biological Causes

- Defects or injuries to certain areas of the brain
- Abnormal amounts of neurotransmitters in the brain.
- Other mental illnesses present in child
Prevalence: how common is it?

- Estimated to be 6-10% of children and teens

- In younger children, ODD is more common in boys

- In older children, ODD occurs about equally.
ODD rarely travels alone
Co-morbid conditions are common

50-65% of ODD children also have ADHD

35% of these children develop some form of affective disorder

20% have some form of mood disorder, such as Bipolar disorder, depression or anxiety

15% develop some form of personality disorder

Many of these children have learning disorders
Developmental Factors

- Presenting problems change with child’s age
- School age: become more defiant and physically aggressive
- Social problems develop as child gets older
Evaluation

- Diagnosis made based on signs and symptoms
- Evaluation by medical or mental health professional
- May include complete medical history and physical exam.
- No specific laboratory test
Treatment of ODD

- Medical Intervention
- Behavior management or modification
- Psychotherapy
- Parent Management training
- Family therapy
- Skills training
Prognosis

1. Grow out of it
2. May turn into something else
3. ODD but nothing else
4. Other disorders in addition to ODD
Strategies to work with students with ODD in the classroom
Video Clip

The Breakfast Club
Transactional dynamic

Oppositional and noncompliant behavior may be best understood as the result of incompatibility between the child and the environment.
Prevention of oppositional behaviors

Creating a psychologically supportive classroom:

• Caring relationships with adults
• Clear expectations
• Opportunities for meaningful participation in learning
• Positive interactions with peers
Goals in working with students:

- Avoid power struggles
- Understand purpose of challenging behaviors
- Understand developmental level of students
- Increase positive interactions between students and adults
- Have students meet expectations of adults
Positive Behavior Supports

- Altering the physical environment
- Maintaining predictability
- Increase choices
- Curriculum responsive to students
- Appreciating positive behaviors
- Teaching replacement skills

(Ruef, Higgins, Glaeser and Patnode, 1998)
Altering the physical environment

- Behavior linked to environmental triggers
  - I.e. noise, distractions, preferential seating
- Room arrangement
- Location of materials
Maintaining predictability

- Have schedule known to all
  - Use planner/agenda, daily classroom poster
- Prepare students for unplanned changes
- Transitions
  - visual, auditory or tactile cues
Increase choices

- Allow students some choices throughout the day to build skills
- Provide array of academic options when feasible
- Teach students appropriate ways to say no or refusal to do task
- Honor ideas students suggest to encourage problem solving
Curriculum responsive to students

- Consider if task is too easy or too difficult
- Is the curriculum of low interest?
- Is it too slow or too fast paced?
- Task variation
- Planning preferred activities consistently throughout the day
- Use of peer support
Cultural Responsiveness

- Is the curriculum culturally sensitive?
- Respect of diversity and learning styles
- Materials of different cultures and backgrounds
Video Segment

Show clip of Freedom Writers
Appreciating positive behaviors

- Use of positive statements as source of encouragement
- Focus on positives of other students in the class while noting needs of student with challenging behaviors
“Think of defiance as an opportunity to teach students something new.”

(Kohn, 1996)
What do you do when you have a student with oppositional and defiant behaviors in your classroom?
The question shifts from: HOW DO WE GET THIS CHILD TO STOP MISBEHAVING? To: WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR THIS CHILD, AND WHAT SKILLS DO WE NEED TO TEACH?
Skills Training

- Use of FBA or FAC to determine purpose of acting out behaviors
- Determine what skills are needed to reduce oppositional behaviors
- Prioritize which skills to focus on while putting others “on back burner for now”
- Integrate skills training across environments
Strategies for skills training

- Build in affective skills training into the curriculum
  - Skillstreaming, Arnold Goldstein
  - ART, Sara Salmon
- Classroom discussions
- Modeling by adults
- Proactive teaching of skills across environments
- Collaborative problem solving discussion, Greene & Ablon
What teachers can do:

- Use a matter-of-fact, neutral tone of voice
- Take a short break if you are too angry to deal with the situation in that moment
- Suggest to the student that they take a break to calm down
- Use support staff to help you and the student
- Engage students in a problem solving process when both parties are calm
What NOT to do:

- Use aggressive or authoritarian language to control the student
- Push the student into a corner
- Plead with the student to do as you wish, ie, “Would you please do this for me this one time…”
- Threaten the student with “if you don’t do _____, then you won’t get _____”
Self Monitoring

- Teach students to become more aware of their behaviors
- Have students keep track of challenging behaviors
Case study
Activity: Designing a Self-Monitoring Form
Behavior Contracts

- Use of home-school communication system to insure school and family aware of behaviors (positive and challenges)
- Write down results of problem solving discussion in terms of what both parties agreed to, without use of contingencies
Behavior Report Card

Student: ________________________________________________
Teacher: __________________ Classroom: __________________

Directions: Review each of the Behavior Report Card items below. For each item, rate the degree to which the student showed the behavior or met the behavior goal.

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_ The student wrote down homework assignments correctly and completely. _

Select the degree to which the goal was met: 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9
Never/Seldom Sometimes Usually/Always

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_ The student turned in his or her completed homework on time. _

Select the degree to which the goal was met: 1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9
Never/Seldom Sometimes Usually/Always

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Parent School Partnerships

- Convene the problem solving team with parent as soon as concerns arise
- Approach parents in a non-defensive, non-threatening manner
- Collaborate instead of interrogate
- Parents are not to blame; it is likely child’s behavior is oppositional at home too
Activity: Break into pairs and discuss how you would talk with a parent about the behaviors their child is exhibiting in school and how you can work together to come up with a plan.
What about consequences?

- Punitive consequences not shown to reduce non-compliant responses
- Natural consequences in their environment are useful
When all else fails….

- Don’t just react - take time to think through the meaning of the behavior
- Consult with building intervention team
- Consider different options within the building (change of classroom, reduced day, change in teacher, peer support)
- Special ed is not always the answer
- Fair does not mean equal
- Request support from district teams
“I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.”

Dr. Haim Ginott