

## **Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD)**

### **Description:**

An emotional and behavioral disorder is an emotional disability characterized by the following:

- (i) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers. For preschool-age children, this would include other guardians.
- (ii) An inability to learn which cannot be adequately explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors.
- (iii) A consistent or chronic (*from a very long time*) inappropriate type of behavior or feelings under normal conditions.
- (iv) A displayed pervasive (*spreading*) mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (v) A displayed tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains or unreasonable fears associated with personal or school problems.

A child with EBD is a child who exhibits one or more of the above emotionally based characteristics of sufficient duration, frequency and intensity that interferes significantly with educational performance to the degree that provision of special educational service is necessary. EBD is an emotional disorder characterized by excesses, lacks or disturbances of behavior.

### **Characteristics:**

Emotional disturbances can affect an individual in areas beyond the emotional. Depending on the specific mental disorder involved, a person's physical, social, or cognitive skills may also be affected. "Mental illnesses are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning".

Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have an emotional disturbance include:

- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness (*short, quick feelings, take decisions without thinking*))
- Aggression or self-injurious behavior (fighting)
- Withdrawal (not interacting socially with others, excessive fear or anxiety)

- Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping/dealing skills)
- Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level)

Children with the most serious emotional disturbances may exhibit distorted thinking, excessive anxiety, bizarre (*very strange, unusual*) motor *acts*, and abnormal mood swings. Many children who do not have emotional disturbance may display some of these same behaviors at various times during their development. However, when children have an emotional disturbance, these behaviors continue over long periods of time. Their behavior signals that they are not coping (*going along/dealing*) with their environment or peers.

## **Causes:**

### **1. Biological Factors**

- Prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol
- A physical illness or disability
- An undernourished or malnourished lifestyle
- Brain damage
- Hereditary factors

### **2. Home Factors**

- Family income below the poverty level
- Stress in the family because of divorce or some other reason
- Inconsistent rules or expectations as well as inconsistent and unhealthy discipline
- Parents have a lack of interest or concern for the child, which leads to a lack of supervision or neglect
- Family members are poor role models, perhaps violent, perhaps do not follow the law
- Parents or siblings physically abuse the child
- There is an overall low rate of positive interactions and high rate of negative interactions in the family
- The family has a poor attitude toward school or education

### **3. School Factors**

- Teachers aren't capable of managing the child's classroom, creating a negative environment
- The school is insensitive to student differences or cultural issues
- Rules are inconsistent

#### **4. Culture Factors**

- Too much expectations and pressure on child
- Cultural shock (when child is exposed to a significantly different culture from their own and do not receive help while adjusting in that culture)

#### **Symptoms:**

##### **1. Emotional Symptoms**

- Easily getting annoyed or nervous
- Often appearing angry
- Putting blame on others
- Refusing to follow rules or questioning authority
- Arguing and throwing tantrums
- Having difficulty in handling frustration

##### **2. Physical Symptoms**

Unlike other types of health issues, a behavioral disorder will have mostly emotional symptoms, with physical symptoms such as a fever, rash, or headache being absent. However, sometimes people suffering from a behavioral disorder will develop a drug abuse problem, which could show physical symptoms such as burnt fingertips, shaking or bloodshot eyes.

#### **Common Disorders:**

##### **1. ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)**

ADHD is a condition that impairs an individual's ability to properly focus and to control impulsive behaviors, or it may make the person overactive.

##### **2. Anxiety Disorders**

We all experience anxiety from time to time, but for many people, including children, anxiety can be excessive, persistent (*continuous*), uncontrollable, and overwhelming (*having strong emotional effect*). An irrational fear of everyday situations may be involved. This high level of anxiety is a definite warning sign that a person may have an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorder is broader term that actually refers to several distinct disabilities that share the main characteristic of irrational fear: generalized anxiety disorder

(GAD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder (also called social phobia), and specific phobias. According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America, anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric illnesses affecting children and adults. They are also highly treatable.

### 3. **Eating Disorders**

Eating disorders are characterized by extremes in eating behavior—either too much or too little—or feelings of extreme distress or concern about body weight or shape. Females are much more likely than males to develop an eating disorder.

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are the two most common types of eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa is characterized by self-starvation and dramatic loss of weight. Bulimia nervosa involves a cycle of binge (*indulge in activity to excess*) eating, then self-induced vomiting. Both of these disorders are potentially life-threatening.

Binge eating is also considered an eating disorder. It's characterized by eating excessive amounts of food, while feeling unable to control how much or what is eaten. Unlike with bulimia, people who binge eat usually do not purge (*remove*) afterward by vomiting or using laxatives.

The most effective and long-lasting treatment for an eating disorder is psychotherapy or counseling, along with careful attention to medical and nutritional needs. Some medications have been shown to be helpful. Ideally, whatever treatment is offered should be tailored to the individual, and this will vary according to both the severity of the disorder and the patient's individual problems, needs, and strengths.

### 4. **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**

Often referred to as OCD, obsessive-compulsive disorder is actually considered an anxiety disorder. OCD is characterized by recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) or repetitive behaviors (compulsions). Repetitive behaviors (hand washing, counting, checking, or cleaning) are often performed with the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or making them go away. Performing these actions provides only temporary relief, and not performing them markedly increases anxiety.

Researches suggest that OCD results from a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Treatment for most people with OCD should include one or more of the following:

- therapist trained in behavior therapy;

- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT);
- medication (usually an antidepressant).

## 5. **Conduct Disorder**

Conduct disorder refers to a group of behavioral and emotional problems in youngsters. Children and teenagers with this disorder have great difficulty following rules and behaving in a socially acceptable way. This may include some of the following behaviors:

- aggression to people and animals
- destruction of property
- deceitfulness, lying, or stealing
- truancy (*staying away from school without good reason*) or other serious violations of rules.

Although conduct disorder is one of the most difficult behavior disorders to treat. Young people often benefit from a range of services that include:

- training for parents on how to handle child or teenager's behavior
- family therapy
- training in problem solving skills for children or teenagers
- community-based services that focus on the young person within the context of family and community influence

## 6. **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar disorder is a serious medical condition that causes dramatic mood swings from overly high or irritable to sad and hopeless, and then back again, often with periods of normal mood in between. Severe changes in energy and behavior go along with these changes in mood.

For most people with bipolar disorder, these mood swings and related symptoms can be stabilized over time using an approach that combines medication and psychosocial treatment.

## 7. **Psychotic Disorders**

Psychotic disorders is another larger term used to refer to severe mental disorders that cause abnormal thinking and perceptions (*understanding/interpretation*). Two of the main symptoms are delusions and hallucinations. Delusions are false beliefs, such as thinking that someone is plotting against you. Hallucinations are false perceptions, such as hearing, seeing, or feeling something that is not there. Schizophrenia is one type of psychotic disorder. There are others as well.

Treatment for psychotic disorders will differ from person to person, depending on the specific disorder involved. Most are treated with a combination of medications and psychotherapy (*a type of counseling*).

## **Assessment**

Screening is an initial process to help identify behavioral needs that takes a relatively small amount of time (a person's time is highly valuable), but provides invaluable information. The process can also provide support to previous data that has been collected from the student's educators and family. The screening process can glean out several different types of behaviors: externalizing (*negative behaviors focusing towards others*), internalizing (*negative behaviors focusing towards self*), adaptive, pro-social, and motivators in the learning process. These behaviors range from disobedience to anxiety to school attendance to cooperation and effort. It can pull out those behaviors that are not as noticeable and allow staff to better serve these students. And then after careful process, detailed assessment is done tests are used like RTI (Response to Intervention – It not only helps in identifying educational weaknesses but also can help in EBD students) and FBA (Functional Behavioral Assessments – they help in identifying root causes of behaviors).

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