

YOU CAN'T MAKE ME: STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING OPPOSITIONAL BEHAVIOR

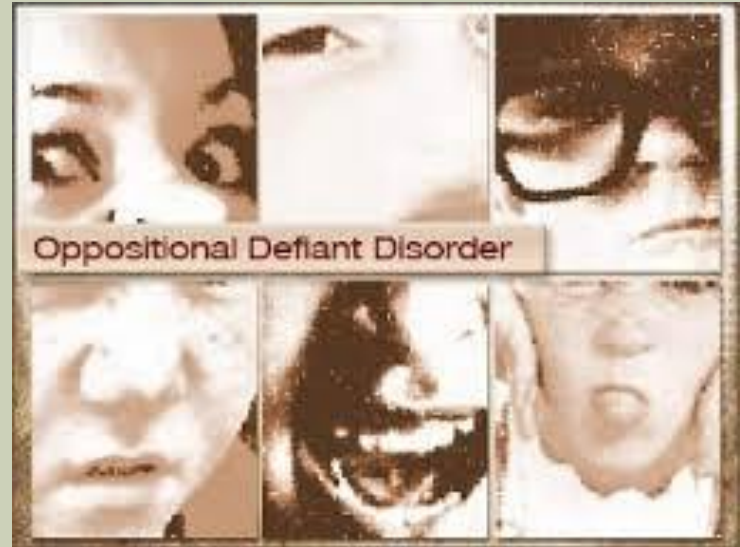
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“Hope comes from understanding and understanding comes from empathy; but when ~~teaching~~ raising children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, empathy does not come easily.”

author unknown





OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER

- A pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness lasting at least 6 months, during which 4 (or more) of the following are present, and exhibited in interactions with at least one individual who is not a sibling:

Angry/Irritable Mood

1. Often loses temper
2. Often touch or easily annoyed
3. Often angry and resentful

Argumentative/Defiant Behavior

4. Often argues with adults
5. Often actively defies or refuses to comply with requests or rules
6. Often deliberately annoys others
7. Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior

Vindictiveness

8. Has been spiteful or vindictive at least twice in the past 6 months

HOW OFTEN IS OFTEN?

- Children younger than 5
Most days for a period of at least 6 months, except (8)
- Children 5 or older
At least once per week for a period of at least 6 months, except (8)

CAUSES OF ODD

Temperament – high emotional reactivity, poor frustration tolerance

Physiological – differences in brain activity in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala

Environmental – harsh or inconsistent parenting, family stressors

- **Environmental causes have been the subject of much debate. The general consensus is they may exacerbate symptoms but do not cause the underlying mental illness.**

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Challenge rules
- Refuse to do assignments/chores
- Disobedient
- Easily angered
- Excessive temper tantrums
- Argumentative
- Will not give up, must win arguments, UNABLE to stop

- Blame others
- Perfectionistic
- Strong sense of justice
- Impatient
- Intolerant
- Verbal more than physical
- Poor peer relationships

IS IT NORMAL?

Early childhood

Teenagers

PARADOX

- **Anti-rule**

- **Pro-fairness**

IT TAKES IT'S TOLL

Parents

Siblings

Friends

School

WHAT WORKS?

- Change the subject to de-escalate the situation
- Choose your battles
- Clear, concise directions
- Consistent rules
- Positive wording in requests
- Positive praise and confidence the child is capable
- Privacy
- “We” not “I”
- Acknowledge attempts/trying – behavior compliant, deal with attitude later

MORE STRATEGIES THAT WORK

- Natural consequences
- Time outs
- Choices, Choices, Choices
- Individualized to the child
- Chores at appropriate level
- Teaching social skills
- Physical release
- Partner with school
- Listen, acknowledge, redirect, defer
- Token economies – sometimes work

KEY WORDS TO USE

- **Regardless**
- **Nevertheless**
- **Depersonalize instructions – “the clock says it’s time to...” not “it’s time to...”**
- **Describe specific positive behaviors**



STRATEGIES

Meeting the letter of the law (but not the intent)

Negotiating

Contrary Violations

Getting in the Last Word

✓ Teach and enforce the spirit of the law, not the letter of it.

✓ Don't tell...Ask

✓ Use planned ignoring.

✓ Let them have the last word.

MORE STRATEGIES

Splitting

✓ Put the spot light back on them.

Refusing to Comply

✓ Agree with them.

Constantly Asking “Why?”

✓ Agree to answer all their concerns and discuss all questions later...during his/her play time.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

- Rational discussion
- Power struggles
- Verbal exchanges
- Shouting
- Arguing
- Threatening
- Sarcasm
- Punishment
- Bargaining
- “Getting tough”

KEY WORDS TO AVOID

- “Must”

- “Have to”

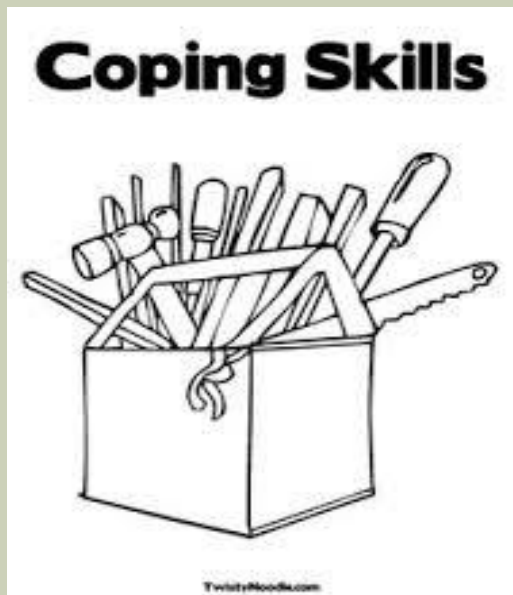
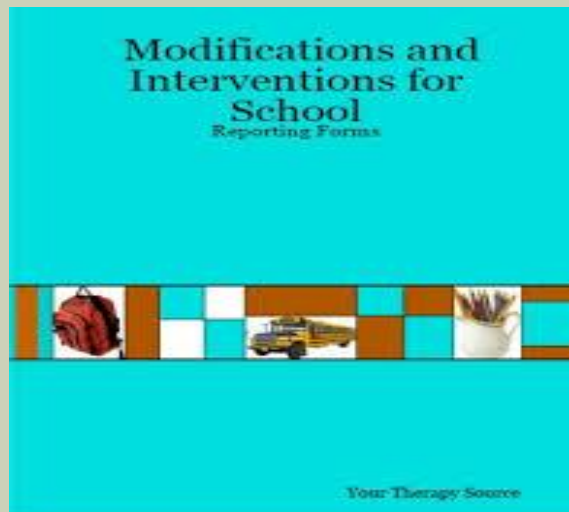
- “You need”

ADULT REACTIONS

- **Don't take it personally**
- **Don't lower yourself to the level of the oppositional child**
- **Don't let yourself get hooked into a discussion or argument**
- **Give them some time to make a decision, and withdraw from the area.**







FINAL THOUGHTS

