

# Defying the Defiance:

## *The Path to Happiness with ODD Students*

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# Oppositional Defiant Disorder

anger-guided disobedience; hostilely defiant behavior toward authority figures

- ▶ ***FREQUENTLY...OFTEN...PURPOSELY***
- ▶ loses temper
- ▶ touchy or easily annoyed
- ▶ angry or resentful
- ▶ argues with adults
- ▶ Defiant, refuses to comply with rules
- ▶ annoys others
- ▶ blames mistakes or inappropriate behavior on others
- ▶ spiteful or vindictive

# Diagnostic details

- ▶ At least 6 months, an early pattern - prior to age 8
- ▶ Almost always at home, easy escalation...
- ▶ External blame is a theme

# Close/overlapping

- ▶ **ADHD:** Developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity
  - ▶ ADHD may be a contributing factor in 30-50% of ODD
- ▶ **Conduct disorder:** A persistent pattern of conduct in which the basic rights of others and major age-appropriate societal norms are violated
  - ▶ ADHD may be related in 25-40% of CD diagnoses
  - ▶ ODD may escalate into CD
- ▶ **Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder:** a childhood condition of extreme irritability, anger, and frequent, intense temper outbursts.

Severity:

0-8=No ODD.

9-16=moderate.

17-32=moderate to significant

CHARACTERISTIC	NEVER	SOMETIMES, RARE	SOMETIMES, WITHIN PAST 6 MONTHS	OFTEN, WITHIN PAST 6 MONTHS	OFTEN, FOR MORE THAN 6 MONTHS
Loses temper	0	1	2	3	4
Argues with adults	0	1	2	3	4
Actively defies	0	1	2	3	4
Deliberately annoys	0	1	2	3	4
Blames others	0	1	2	3	4
Touchy, annoyed	0	1	2	3	4
Angry, resentful	0	1	2	3	4
Spiteful, vindictive	0	1	2	3	4



## Where does this pattern come from?

- ▶ Temperament: of the child/of the parent
- ▶ Parenting: inconsistency, poor discipline practices
- ▶ Developmental issues, difficulty navigating the “terrible twos”



# Other sources of ODD

- ▶ Feeling a lack of control, authority, appropriate power
- ▶ Habitual life/academic/social stress, unresolved grief, anger
- ▶ Trauma



# The **A**dverse **C**hildhood **E**xperiences studies

## *A longitudinal look at the effects of trauma*

### The “Big Ten”

1. emotional abuse
2. physical abuse
3. sexual abuse
4. emotional neglect
5. physical neglect
6. divorce
7. domestic violence
8. Substance abuse of a parent
9. Parent with mental illness
10. Incarcerated parent

### Beyond the ACEs

- ▶ Racism is trauma
  - ▶ Being devalued
  - ▶ Feeling at risk
  - ▶ Reduced opportunities
- ▶ COVID 19 is trauma
  - ▶ Lack of motivation
  - ▶ Time management skills
  - ▶ Sleeping too much
  - ▶ Parents are handling education, jobs, everything
  - ▶ Disconnected from peers
  - ▶ Irritability

# In a typical classroom 22% of the students have enough ACEs to impact their behavior!

## How many ACEs?

- ▶ 36% have 0 ACEs
- ▶ 26% have 1 ACE
- ▶ 16% have 2 ACEs
- ▶ **3 OR MORE:**
- ▶ 9.5% have 3 ACEs
- ▶ 12.5% have 4 or more ACEs

## Impact in the classroom

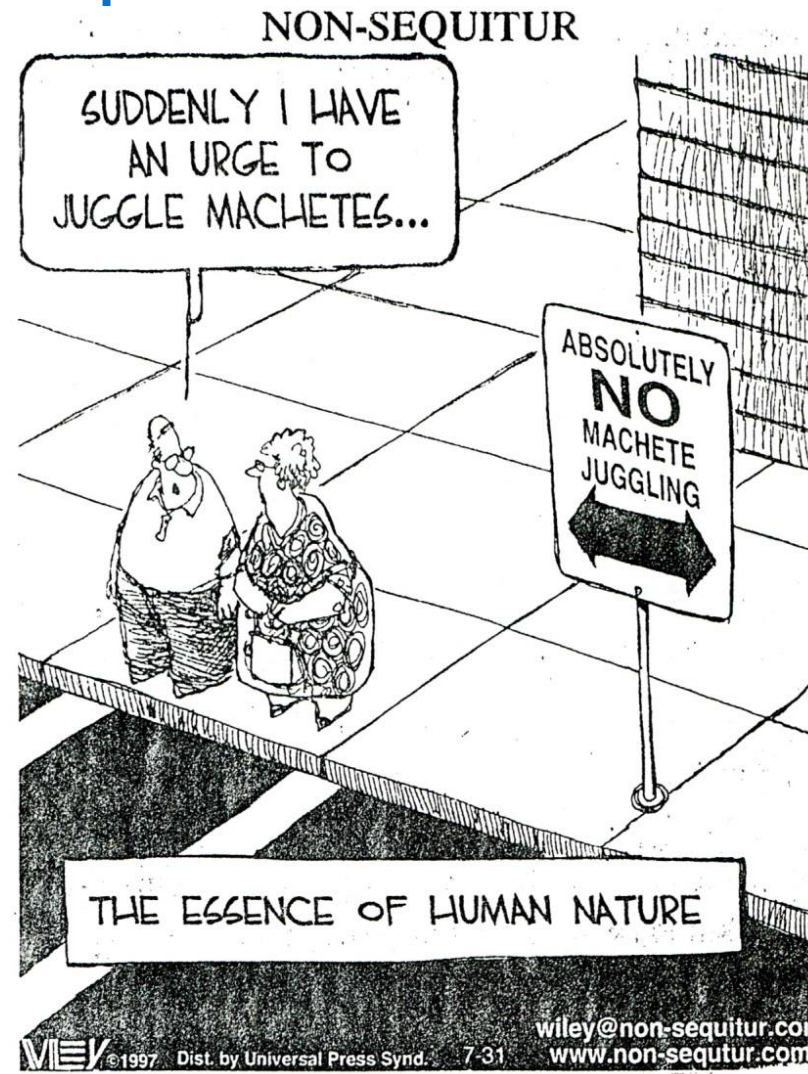
- ▶ Organizing materials
- ▶ Understanding cause & effect
- ▶ Paying attention
- ▶ Taking another's perspective
- ▶ Attachments: relationships, empathy, friendships
- ▶ Regulating emotions
- ▶ Executive functioning
- ▶ Managing self: *reactive, impulsive, aggressive, defiant, withdrawn, perfectionistic*

# *But he's just doing this on purpose!!!*

- ▶ Well maybe not...
- ▶ When a person feels a sense of threat, the protection systems kick in:
  - ▶ Fight!
  - ▶ Flight!
  - ▶ Freeze!

# Characteristics: *A second look...from within the oppositional person*

I am the equal of those in authority - no one has the right to tell me what to do!



# What ELSE does the ODD person think and feel?

- ▶ *When you punish or reward me, I feel that you are trying to control or manipulate me*
- ▶ *My greatest sense of control comes from how I can make others feel*

## Characteristics: A *third* view...from within the adult coping with this student

- ▶ You will *not* talk to me that way!
- ▶ Because I am the teacher!
- ▶ I will argue with you to show that I am in control
- ▶ You *will* take responsibility for your behavior!
- ▶ I have already tried that...it does not work

# So WHAT do we *do*?!?

A prescription offered by Dr. William Dikel, *The Teacher's Guide to Student Mental Health*

- ▶ Avoid engaging in power struggles
- ▶ Offer choices
- ▶ Have a sense of humor
- ▶ Don't take the behavior personally

# 4 ideas to break coercion patterns early



1. More **POSITIVE** than **NEGATIVE** feedback: The “Matching Law” says that reinforcement determines behavior.
  1. If negative behavior gets a response every 3 times, vs. positive behavior which gets a response every 15 times, then negative behavior will probably happen 5 times more often than **positive** (Snyder, J. & Stoolmiller, M. (2002). Reinforcement and coercive mechanisms in the development of antisocial behavior. The family. In J. Reid, G. Patterson, & J. Snyder (Eds.), *Antisocial behavior in children and adolescents: A developmental analysis and model for intervention* (pp. 65-100). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.)
2. Immediate academic success increases appropriate behavior
3. Help the family parent effectively
4. A well managed 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom significantly diminishes future aggressive behavior



# The well-managed classroom in the well-managed school



- ▶ Effective classroom management:
  - ▶ Prevent vs. react; teach what you want to get; reinforce more than punish
- ▶ Directly teach rules, expectations, & behaviors
- ▶ Practice behaviors where you use them
- ▶ Attention-getting cue for the entire school
- ▶ Active supervision: proxemic support, eye contact, brief touch as you pass by
- ▶ Pre-correct for CHRONIC problem behaviors; manage minor behaviors quietly and quickly
- ▶ Three-tiered school wide systems (PBIS)

# Counseling tactics

## Avoid

- ▶ Lectures and sermons
- ▶ Persuasion
- ▶ Interruption
- ▶ Yelling
- ▶ Mind-reading
- ▶ Arguing

## Use

- ▶ Brevity
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Neutral voice tone
- ▶ One topic at a time
- ▶ Honesty & Humor

# The art of *reframing* (avoiding power struggles)

## Negatives

- ▶ Often loses temper
- ▶ Often argues with adults
- ▶ Actively defies, refuses to comply
- ▶ Deliberately annoys others
- ▶ Blames others
- ▶ Touchy or easily annoyed
- ▶ Often angry or resentful
- ▶ Often spiteful or vindictive

## Silver linings

# Rational discipline (*offer choices*)

▶ Fight?

▶ Flight?

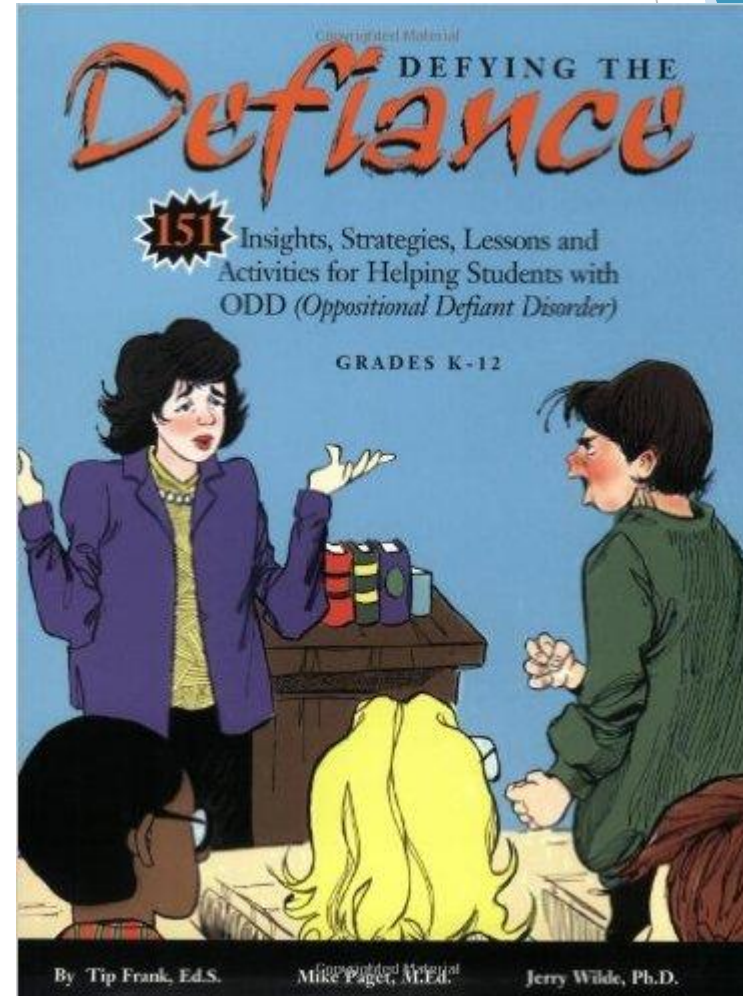
▶ **RATIONAL**

▶ *Choices*

▶ Pre-determined

▶ Applied calmly

▶ Reliably



# Power Struggles

*avoid them!*



- ▶ Escalating interaction
- ▶ Worse in the presence of others
- ▶ A long-standing pattern
- ▶ Disengage
- ▶ The power of NOT HAVING THE LAST WORD
- ▶ Choices

I'd love to argue  
some more...

But right now I've  
got to finish this  
lesson. If you'd like,  
I'll be glad to meet  
you after school so  
we can continue this  
discussion.

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"I'm thinking of changing my centers to Sit Quietly,  
Behave Yourself, and Just Stop That."

## ODD Busters & Talking Points

- ▶ **Verbal v. Non-verbal communication issues**
- ▶ **Relationship support**

## INDIRECT instruction of Social skills appropriate for Students with ODD

- ▶ Following instructions
- ▶ Accepting consequences
- ▶ Listening to others
- ▶ Compromising with others
- ▶ Making restitution
- ▶ Showing sensitivity to others
- ▶ Negotiating with others
- ▶ Conflict resolution
- ▶ Accepting decisions of authority



# Interventions: Medications

- ▶ Medications may treat one of the root causes
- ▶ Medications alone will not be sufficient
- ▶ Medication roadblocks
- ▶ Suggested references
  - ▶ *It's Nobody's Fault...New Hope and Help for Difficult Children.* Dr. Harold Koplewicz
  - ▶ *Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medications for Kids.* Dr. Timothy Wilens

# Interventions: the right *attitude*

- ▶ A fight, a flight, or a plan?
- ▶ Attitudinal therapy:
  - ▶ Neutral to positive gets positive
  - ▶ Negative gets neutral
  - ▶ Efficient, business like
  - ▶ Sometimes - Nothing but Neutral

# The *Confusion* about Positive Reinforcement

- ▶ Manipulation or reward?
- ▶ For whose benefit?
- ▶ Useful strategies:
  - ▶ Privacy
  - ▶ Out of the limelight
  - ▶ Neutral enthusiasm
  - ▶ In the best interest of the student
  - ▶ Persistence

# The Puzzle Technique

**A reinforcement contract**

# Earning your way out of work

**A reinforcement plan based on resisting work**

# Money terms

**Meet the standards, get the reward**

# Hidden Management Strategies

- ▶ Avoid responsibility
  - ▶ NO: “Because I said so” ?
  - ▶ YES: “The clock says”
  - ▶ YES: “The rules say”
- ▶ Negative expectations
- ▶ The Domino Effect - behavioral momentum
- ▶ The Double Bind - either compliance or compliance

# Building self-management in Resistant Students

- ▶ Strength-coaching
- ▶ Generosity



# Final thoughts

- ▶ This is not personal; you are simply in the “line of fire”
- ▶ Keep yourself focused, professional, healthy
- ▶ Develop your best plan
- ▶ Persist
- ▶ Decompress your emotions
- ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ Realistic expectations
- ▶ Confidence in what you are doing

**Thank you for your interest in  
these very complex students!**

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