

# Preface

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Conservative estimates from both educators and mental health professionals indicate that approximately 10% of children and adolescents in this country will experience emotional and behavioral problems serious enough to require professional attention. In addition, a sizeable percentage of children and youth can be expected to encounter periodic social and emotional adjustment difficulties. Based on these statistics, children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral conflicts are a reality for many families who must learn to cope with the day-to-day challenges of meeting the special needs of their children. Furthermore, many professionals—community agency personnel, nurses, and speech pathologists, to name a few—also work with these individuals with little or no direct training in the specific needs or characteristics of these children.

This book is designed for educators who teach children and adolescents who have emotional or behavioral disabilities or both. We also hope that parents and ancillary caregivers will find this book helpful in understanding and interacting with these individuals. In spite of the great number of young people who experience these problems, limited information is available on the topic; professionals report a paucity of basic information about childhood emotional problems. As a result, professionals and laypersons (including parents and family members) are often left groping for answers to questions about children's and adolescents' behavioral and emotional problems, including definitions, causes, treatment methods, and support services. This book will prove to be helpful to both of these reader groups. Parents and families will find it useful as they attempt to understand their children and the services available to meet their needs. And professionals having contact with children and youth who have emotional disturbances and behavior problems will gain a better understanding of these youngsters. Thus, this book is of particular value to myriad professionals, including:

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- Physicians
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Judges
- Juvenile workers
- Occupational therapists
- Physical therapists
- Speech pathologists
- Teachers
- Counselors

It is our intention to provide straightforward, basic information about childhood and adolescent emotional and behavioral problems; issues that represent diversity will be integrated in the text. Interspersed throughout each chapter is content designed to highlight the most commonly perceived issues in a functional manner. The following is an outline of topics that will be discussed:

**Chapter 1. Introduction to Emotional Disturbance and Behavioral Disorders**

- An overview of issues related to understanding children and youth with emotional and behavioral problems
- Understanding that disturbing behavior may be a disability (such as visual impairment)
- Behavior problems that can be linked to a disability (e.g., serious emotional disturbance and related psychiatric problems, behavior disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities)
- Behavior problems that are primarily related to environmental and other non-(bio)physical factors

**Chapter 2. Major Types of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

- Various forms and subtypes of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth discussed in practical terms, including those primarily by school professionals and community mental health practitioners (e.g., hyperactivity, anxiety, phobias, depression, substance abuse, withdrawn behaviors, anorexia nervosa, conduct disorders)
- Characteristics and other salient information, such as prevalence, presented for the major forms of disorders

**Chapter 3. Causes of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

- The causes of emotional and behavioral problems and related disorders
- Family and community influences on behavior
- Setting-specific influences (school or home, etc.)
- Situation-specific influences (death, divorce)
- Biological (or possible genetic) influences
- Possibility of cure

**Chapter 4. Evaluating and Assessing Students Who Have Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

- The purpose of evaluation
- Defining the troubling behavior or emotions (or both)
- Questions related to screening, diagnosing, and evaluating the progress of students identified as having emotional and behavioral problems
- The professionals involved in conducting evaluations
- Diagnostic and assessment methods, such as rating scales, interviews, and observations; examples of these methods provided

**Chapter 5. Violence and Aggression in Schools**

- The difference between aggressive and violent behaviors
- Responses to school violence and aggression
- Reducing and preventing violence and aggression in schools
- Juvenile delinquency

**Chapter 6. Adolescents Who Have Emotional and Behavioral Disorders and the Juvenile Justice System**

- Relationship between EBD and adjudication
- Ethnicity, mental health, and juvenile justice in the United States
- Educational options for adjudicated youth
- Special education in correctional settings

**Chapter 7. Treatment of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders**

- The nature and characteristics of different forms of treatment and intervention for children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders
- Psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive, and other major treatment forms
- Different program options available in school and community settings

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- Detailed management programs (rules, positive and negative consequences) for the home, classroom, and clinic settings
- Specific management techniques

**Chapter 8. School-Based Placements**

- How professionals and parents may identify and access appropriate resources for children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders, including educational service options and the roles of various mental health services, such as community mental health, residential treatment, and so forth.
- Early childhood concerns (preschool, Head Start)

**Chapter 9. Supporting Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Outside the Public School Setting**

- Medical interventions used to treat children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders
- Major forms of medications prescribed for children with psychiatric problems, including how they work and how they are started, maintained, and discontinued
- Possible short-term and long-term effects
- Nontraditional interventions

**Chapter 10. The Role of Families in Supporting Children With Emotional and Behavioral Concerns**

- The role of effective parent and professional communication and partnership
- Effective planning and problem solving for children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders: professionals and families participating in identifying, planning, and implementing educational strategies, support services, and problem-solving programs
- The role of school and community professionals in assisting parents and family members to plan for and use appropriate strategies to respond to various short-term and long-term issues and challenges of children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders
- Facilitating social support and peer relations, including person-centered planning

## Chapter 11. What Lies Ahead: Postschool Transition

- Information and recommendations for assisting professionals and families to successfully respond to transition challenges, such as work and adult living options
- EBD resources
- Resources in print
- Internet resources (organizations, parent sites, behavior sites)

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