



Emotional Disturbance (ED)

General Description of the Population

Students who are emotionally disturbed display behaviors that seriously interfere with the learning environment and their ability to benefit from it. These behaviors are demonstrated over a long period of time and significantly extend beyond the norm of accepted classroom behavior.

Emotionally Disturbed students have serious challenges in controlling themselves and require a great deal of patience, structure, and reinforcement so that they can do better. Parents and teachers must work together in changing these students' behavior. In addition, goals, expectations, and consequences must be clearly defined. Progress usually requires many small steps toward the goals established for the student.

Common Characteristics

The characteristics below serve as examples of behaviors that may be displayed by this population of students.

- Attention-getting behavior
- Low self-esteem
- Limited problem solving skills
- Poor impulse control
- Defiance of authority figures
- Low attention span
- Minimal social interaction skills
- May be very disruptive to others
- Personal struggle with controlling self
- Fears resulting from school problems
- Problems in getting along with others
- Conduct disorders
- Behavior adversely affects learning
- Hyperactive
- Can be withdrawn
- Insecure
- Easily confused
- Poor communication skills
- Problems working in groups
- General mood of unhappiness
- Poor conflict resolution
- Can be immature
- Covers up emotions
- Can be aggressive
- May have personality disorders

Instructional Strategies

- Present materials at independent level, not frustration level
- Provide short, manageable tasks
- Set short-term expectations
- Repeat directions frequently
- Follow through on everything

Emotional Disturbance (ED)

- Be willing to modify classroom expectations and homework problems
- Request students to demonstrate verbally their understanding of directions/expectations
- Materials should be presented for all learning styles; e.g., auditory, visual
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Individualize work assignments
- Structure classroom environment

Behavioral Strategies

- Use positive reinforcers
- Use behavior contracts
- Do not place hands on students
- Keep a sense of humor and use it
- Solve problems privately not publicly
- When disciplining the student address the specific behavior you are disturbed with and avoid any indication you dislike the student personally
- Label exact behavior desired; do not be subtle
- Give two choices only, either/or
- Be firm, fair, and flexible
- Avoid setting the student up for failure
- Do not put unrealistic expectations on the student
- Have rules posted around the room
- Make expectations clear
- Avoid power struggles
- Individualize behavior plans
- Consistently interrelate with students
- Be consistent
- Encourage students to make choices
- Provide time-out options
- Involve parents
- Teach problem solving strategies to the students
- Establish a detailed behavior plan, with consequences, and share this with the students



Information taken from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

THE PATH PROJECT

Partners Resource Network, Inc.
1090 Longfellow Drive, Suite B
Beaumont, TX 77706

Phone: 409-898-4684
Toll Free: 800-866-4726
Fax: 409-898-4869

Email: partnersresource@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.PartnersTx.org



You have our permission to copy and distribute this fact sheet.