



BrainWave Centre

Objective Measurement...
Confident Management

INFORMATION Sheet

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

All children are oppositional at times, especially when they are tired, hungry, frustrated or upset. They may argue, talk back, disobey, and defy parents, teachers, and other adults.

Oppositional behaviour is a normal part of development particularly in children aged two to three years of age and early adolescents. When unco-operative and hostile behaviour becomes frequent and consistent, compared with other children of the same age and developmental level, and when it affects the child's social, family, and academic life, it causes serious concern.

Children and adolescents with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) display a consistent pattern of unco-operative, defiant, and hostile behaviour toward authority figures that seriously interferes with day-to-day functioning.

Symptoms of ODD may include frequent temper tantrums, excessive arguing with adults, active defiance and refusal to comply with requests and rules. Further symptoms include deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people, blaming others for mistakes or misbehaviour, often being touchy or easily annoyed by others, frequent anger and resentment, mean and hateful talking when upset, and seeking revenge. These symptoms occur in multiple settings, often more noticeable at home or school. The causes of ODD are unknown. Biological and environmental factors may play a role.

A child presenting with ODD symptoms should have a comprehensive evaluation. It is important to look for other disorders which may be present; such as, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning difficulties, mood disorders (depression, bipolar disorder) and anxiety disorders. Some children with ODD are at risk of developing conduct disorder.

Treatment requires a combination of various strategies:

- Parent Training Programs help manage the child's behaviour
- Individual Psychotherapy develops more effective anger management strategies
- Family Psychotherapy improves communication
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy assists with problem solving and decreases negativity
- Social Skills Training increases flexibility and improves frustration tolerance with peers
- Neurofeedback can be instrumental in assisting some children/adolescents with calming and regulating behaviour and emotion and allowing the opportunity for rational conversation and an empathetic viewpoint. Neurofeedback is offered at the BrainWave Centre

Parents can help their child with ODD by:

- Giving praise and positive reinforcement when the child/adolescent shows flexibility or co-operation
- Take time out during conflict to provide good modelling for the child
- Avoid power struggles, prioritise the things you want your child to do
- Set up reasonable, age appropriate limits with consequences that can be enforced consistently
- Obtain support from the other adults (teachers, coaches, and spouse) dealing with your child
- Manage your own stress with exercise and relaxation
- Use respite care as needed

Many children with ODD will respond well to positive parenting techniques, Behaviour Management techniques, Parenting Advice and Individual and Family Counselling. All these services, which can assist with ODD, are offered by psychologists at the BrainWave Centre.