

# Etiology of Behavioral Disorders in Children and Adolescents

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## Abstract

Behavioral disorders diagnosed and treated during childhood and adolescence are characterized by a wide variety of symptoms and impairments. These may include developmental delays, learning disabilities, severe emotional disturbances, emotional trauma, and related problems, which may or may not fall under the heading of psychopathology per se. Developmental psychopathology studies the causes and course of these developmental, emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral disorders that appear during childhood. These phenomena are studied by considering a range of processes occurring throughout the life span, including normal and abnormal development, risk and protective (resilience) factors, and adaptive and maladaptive consequences.

**Keywords :** behavior problems; emotional regulation/dysregulation; genetics; interpersonal trauma

## Introduction

The relationship between behavior problems and psychiatric disorders in individuals with intellectual disability is still unresolved [1]. Emotional and behavioral disorders are so disruptive that parents and others want to know what causes them. When a child or adolescent consistently has intense emotional or physical outbursts, their relationships and learning suffer [2]. Adults and other children and adolescents are also affected by eruptions of problematic feelings and behaviors. Unfortunately for parents and other adults in the child's life, the causes of emotional and behavioral disorders are still largely unknown or poorly understood. However, theories are being developed and studied, and some have emerged that appear to be solid causes of these difficult disorders [3].

As psychology researchers have studied behavioral patterns and emotional dysfunctions, they have discovered that the causes of emotional and behavioral disorders fall into different groups. There are four categories underlying behavioral and emotional disorders: biological, developmental, environmentally related, including home, learned [4].

Although there is no single cause of emotional and behavioral disorders, there are factors that contribute to unwanted actions and the expression of feelings.

### Biological causes of emotional and behavioral disorders

The brain itself is often the root cause of the development of emotional and behavioral disorders. Sometimes, there is a chemical imbalance. When it comes to mental health, understanding the concept of a chemical imbalance in the brain is vital. This condition can manifest in various ways, affecting our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors [5]. Other times,

brain development is affected. Sometimes, brain injuries lead to problems in the brain's emotional center. Experiencing trauma, with or without a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, affects brain signals and can lead to emotional and behavioral problems.

Sometimes, a mother's pregnancy and delivery problems can cause harm to an unborn baby or newborn. These difficulties can contribute to future emotional and behavioral disorders. Furthermore, if a child's mother used drugs or alcohol during pregnancy, the child is at increased risk for numerous physical and mental health problems, including emotional and behavioral disorders [6].

Illness is a suspected cause of emotional and behavioral disorders. Physical illnesses or disabilities have been shown to cause or contribute to behavioral and emotional disorders [7]. Although not a disease, malnutrition has also been implicated in these disorders. Genetics also appears to play a role in the development of emotional and behavioral disorders, although the exact link remains unclear [8]. Personality may be linked to genetics. A child's temperament (personality) may predispose them to emotional and behavioral problems and disorders if other circumstances are present [9].

### Developmental causes of emotional and behavioral Disorders

Development refers to the ongoing process of change and maturation. Each stage of life involves tasks that must be successfully completed for mental health and life satisfaction. When a child's development is disrupted and problematic, there can be negative consequences for mental health and cognitive growth [10].

Emotional and developmental disorders can stem from these developmental causes [11]:

- Attachment problems, either a lack of positive attachment to the primary caregiver or excessive attachment leading to clinginess and difficulty separating from the caregiver.
- A failure to develop trust during infancy, leading to fear and mistrust.
- An inability to experience autonomy and instead internalizing a sense of shame for exploring.
- Thwarting attempts to show initiative and instead feeling guilty for not trying new things.
- A failure to experience a sense of competence, leading to feelings of inferiority, during the elementary school years.

When children fail to perform well on any of these tasks, their risk of developing emotional and behavioral problems increases. The more developmental problems a child has, the greater the risk of emotional and behavioral problems [12].

#### Causes of emotional and behavioral disorders: home life

Parents are essential to their children's healthy development. Certain aspects of parenting or the family environment can contribute to emotional and behavioral disorders [13]. These include:

- Significant and chronic stress at home
- A lack of family structure
- An authoritarian parenting style with rigid and excessive rules and punishments
- Permissive parenting with little or no expectations, limits, or establishment of acceptable behaviors
- Inconsistent expectations of the child and discipline
- Distant and uninterested parents
- Sexual abuse
- Verbal or physical abuse and general dysfunction at home
- More negative than positive interactions at home

Creating and maintaining a healthy, positive, and loving home environment is beneficial for everyone. There are parenting programs available to help both parents and children thrive [14].

That said, parenting is one of the most "challenging job" there is.

#### Learned Behavior: a cause of emotional and behavioral disorders

Sometimes, there are no underlying biological or developmental causes for emotional and behavioral disorders. Instead, children learn that outbursts get them what they want and need: attention from the adults in their lives [15].

Ways they internalize this include:

- High levels of negativity and pessimism modeled at home
- The association of punishment for behavioral problems with increased attention
- The realization that acting out is the only way to get a response from parents or teachers

Multiple factors are potential causes of emotional and behavioral disorders. Knowing how biology, development, parenting, and the family environment contribute to emotional and behavioral disorders will help take steps to provide children with positive experiences from birth (or

prenatal) through childhood and adolescence [16]. The attitude of some parents does not allow their child to experience things, to live their lives; this posture is sometimes linked, in the case of children with disabilities, to the difference between the dream child and the reality of the child born. Some parents lock themselves into a certainty of "divine trial," their only options being rejection, repair, or the king child [17].

#### Conclusion

Practice points for determining etiology

1. The assessment of the etiology of the behavioral disorder must include the individual's identity, that is, the identification of a self-representation that accommodates reality.
2. The presence of autistic traits must be identified in any individual presenting with a behavioral disorder.
3. The assessment of challenging behaviors must include an assessment of comorbid psychopathology such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
4. In all individuals, the association between epileptic seizures and peri-ictal behavioral changes must be identified. Why is this important?
5. In all individuals, the association between seizure worsening or improvement and behavioral change must be assessed.

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