



**MENTAL
HEALTH
AUTHORITY**

Understanding Behavioural Disorders

What Are Behavioural Disorders?

Behavioural disorders refer to patterns of disruptive, impulsive, or emotionally distressing behaviours that interfere with a person's social, academic, or daily functioning. These disorders can negatively impact relationships, school performance, and overall well-being if left untreated.

Why Should We Be Concerned?

Behavioural disorders are among the leading reasons children and adolescents are referred for mental health support. If not addressed early, they can persist into adulthood, affecting career prospects, relationships, and overall mental health.

Signs of Behavioural Disorders

Watch out for these warning signs in yourself or others:

- Easily irritated, angry, or anxious
- Difficulty coping with frustration
- Frequent tantrums or emotional outbursts
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Anxiety that disrupts daily activities
- Destruction of property or aggression
- Lying, stealing, or skipping school
- Early substance use (smoking, alcohol, drugs)
- Defiance towards authority figures
- Changes in appetite, weight, or hygiene
- Unusual physical signs (e.g., burnt fingertips, shaking, bloodshot eyes)





Common Types of Behavioural Disorders

Behavioural disorders can be grouped into different categories, including:

- Anxiety Disorders (e.g., Generalized Anxiety Disorder, OCD, PTSD)
- Disruptive Behavioural Disorders (e.g., Oppositional Defiant Disorder)
- Emotional Disorders (e.g., Depression, Emotional Behavioural Disorder)
- Developmental Disorders (e.g., ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD affects focus, impulse control, and activity levels. It is more common in boys than girls and can make learning and social interactions challenging.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Children with ODD display persistent anger, defiance, and hostility, especially towards authority figures.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD involves distressing thoughts (obsessions) that lead to compulsive behaviours performed to reduce anxiety.

What Causes Behavioural Disorders?

Behavioural disorders can arise from multiple factors, including:

Biological Causes:

- Brain development issues
- Hereditary factors
- Physical illness or malnutrition

Family & Environmental Factors:

- Family conflicts (e.g., divorce, trauma)
- Harsh or inconsistent discipline
- Exposure to violence or neglect





SEEKING HELP

The earlier a behavioural disorder is identified and managed, the better the outcome. If you or someone you know is struggling, seek support from a trusted adult, school counselor, or healthcare professional.

For immediate assistance, contact:
**MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
(MHA) HELPLINE**

**0800
678-678**

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