

# ABOUT OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANCE DISORDER (ODD)



Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is a condition where the learner is consistently angry, argumentative and defiant, particularly towards figures of authority. It generally arises in early childhood (before 8 years old) but can affect a person for their entire life.

Each learner with ODD is a unique individual and adjustments to their educational program and learning environment should be tailored to their needs. When you understand the impact of ODD on the individual learner, you'll be better able to adjust to their needs.



**Government  
of South Australia**

Department for Education

## What ODD is

Characteristics of ODD include:

- being stubborn and not following instructions. This can include the learner persistently arguing with authority figures and defying their requests
- being unable to accept boundaries and often testing limits
- not accepting responsibility for their own actions and blaming other people
- intentionally saying or doing hurtful things when upset
- being unable to regulate their emotions. This can include a learner losing their temper frequently, being easily annoyed or angered and being resentful of other people, such as having frequent outbursts of anger and resentment (Fraser and Wray, 2008).

## Diagnosis of ODD

ODD is hard to diagnose because some of the characteristics are part of normal childhood development, but with ODD the characteristics are more frequent, more severe and persist over time. In younger learners, ODD is more common in boys. In older learners, it occurs equally in boys and in girls.

## Impact of ODD on learning

In a learning environment, a learner with ODD may experience difficulty:

- managing their emotions
- following instructions and rules
- making and maintaining friends
- problem solving
- understanding the consequences of their behaviour.

## Strengths of learners with ODD

Learners with ODD will bring a broad array of strengths that may include:

- the ability to learn and pay attention in the same ways as their peers
- a normal working memory, ability to remember things in their head like images, numbers or several pieces of information at once
- being highly motivated by rewards
- enjoying a hands-on learning experience
- creativity and an enjoyment of art.

(Deakin University, 2021)

# ODD ADJUSTMENTS



## EXAMPLES OF ADJUSTMENTS



### Prosocial behaviour

- Build empathy in the learner by explicitly teaching positive acts that benefit other people. This can be done by modelling caring acts such as helping an individual in need or sharing personal resources.
- Teach the learner how to communicate how they are feeling without using words. For example, put a feelings thermometer on the wall, or play feelings card games to help learners to know what emotions in themselves or others look like.



### Peer relationships

- Strengthen the learner's social skills. Provide opportunities to coach them in sharing, apologising, agreeing with others and having conversations (listening, letting the other person talk, waiting their turn to talk). This can be done through role plays, social scripts and video.



### Problem-solving skills

- Teach the learner how to problem solve, which may help them to persist with schoolwork instead of getting frustrated. Help them to identify a problem, think of possible solutions, choose the best solution and consider if the solution worked.



### Transitions and changes

- Provide support or give prior warning of any known or planned changes to the daily schedule, for example, an educator or staff absence, or upcoming excursions.
- Provide a countdown warning before transitions (use a timer if needed), for example, 'Sam, 5 minutes of literacy, then maths' or 'Sam, 5 minutes left in this classroom, then you will move to the gym for PE'.



### Rules and expectations

- Start fresh every day – let the little things go and avoid power struggles.
- Have clear and consistent rules and expectations. All children are more likely to follow the rules if they are stated clearly. Revisit them regularly through a variety of deliveries, for example, make them into a quiz in one lesson, or a pairs talk activity in another lesson.