

## Disorders

*These definitions are provided for your information. Do not try to diagnose your child. Please consult a physician or other professional if you have questions regarding your child's emotional or mental health.*



### Suggested Websites

*Referral to these websites is for information purposes only; no endorsement of these websites by IDFFCMH is intended or implied.*

National Institute of Mental Health  
Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Massachusetts General Hospital Mood and Anxiety Disorders Institute

### Anxiety Disorders

These can include Separation Anxiety, characterized by fear of leaving home or of losing his or her parents; Overanxious Disorder, a generalized excessive worry about almost everything, possibly with perfectionist tendencies; Avoidance Disorder, an acute shyness and fear of being judged, this is the childhood version of social phobia; Panic Disorder, characterized by sweating, shaking, a pounding heart, nausea and even a fear of dying.

### Asperger's Syndrome

These individuals may be preoccupied with a particular subject of interest. They have a great deal of difficulty reading nonverbal cues and very often have difficulty determining proper body space. Often overly sensitive to sounds, tastes, smells, and sights, the person may prefer soft clothing, certain foods, and be bothered by sounds or lights no one else hears or sees. They have a normal or high IQ and may exhibit exceptional skill in a specific area. Because of their high degree of functionality and their naiveté, they are often viewed as eccentric. While language development seems normal, they often have deficits in pragmatics and prosody. Vocabularies may be extraordinarily rich and some children sound like "little professors." However, they can be extremely literal and have difficulty using language in a social context. Asperger's Syndrome is presently described as an autism spectrum disorder.

### Bipolar Disorder

A pattern of manic "highs" and depressive "lows" or a combination of manic energy with a depressed mood characterizes pediatric bipolar disorder. The child may be easily irritated, inattentive, hypersexual or easily enraged. He or she may have multiple mood shifts or seem like two different people. The child can be charming, funny and bright, but also bossy and difficult to live with at home and in school.

### Conduct Disorder

Common symptoms of Conduct Disorder include aggression, destructiveness, deceitfulness, truancy, and lack of remorse. They can be bullies fond of using weapons and often

demonstrate cruelty toward people and animals. Boys tend to outnumber girls with this disorder.

### **Depression**

Some 2% of children and 8% of adolescents may suffer from depression. Indicators are often found in changes in schoolwork habits, aches and pains that have no physical basis, negative self-judgment, irritability or aggressiveness. The child may become withdrawn or lethargic or have problems with sleep.

### **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**

On the obsessive side this may include excessive fears such as fear of germs or perceived dangers or a need for symmetry and perfection; in the compulsive aspect ritual or repetitive actions are common. Boys are twice as likely as girls to have this common disorder; the peak age is around 10 years, although it can start much earlier.

### **Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

Characterized by inflexible behavior, the child with Oppositional Defiant Disorder can be defiant, hostile, argumentative with adults, belligerent, resentful or spiteful. They may feel entitled to be unreasonable in their demands and tend to blame others for their problems. The condition is most common in boys.

### **Pediatric-onset Schizophrenia**

Although rare under the age of 15, this condition can be severe when it does occur. The child may show symptoms of other emotional disturbances such as conduct disorder, depression or ADHD. They may show inappropriate emotion or be confused about what is real, including seeing or hearing things that are not there.