



School Mental Health Training



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Eastern Mediterranean**

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Lecture 11

Strategies to address behavioural manifestations of common mental health problems 4



Learning objectives

Understand behavioural manifestations and interventions for



**oppositional/ conduct
problems**



bullying



substance abuse



Strategies to address behaviours that may manifest in the classroom

Strategies are organized into three categories

Tier 1 strategies

address **mild** problems, are simple to implement and can benefit all students in the classroom

Tier 2 strategies

address **moderate** problems and require specific activities tailored to the child with problems

Tier 3 strategies

address **severe** problems, require specific activities tailored to the child with problems, and may necessitate the involvement of additional teaching staff



Universal strategies for helping children with emotional difficulties

Empathic listening and taking a supportive stance

Modelling positive mental health strategies such as relaxation, mindfulness and managing stress

Teach students to tighten and loosen their fingers

Teach students to breathe in slowly and deeply through their nose, hold as they count to five, and slowly exhale


Help students challenge negative thoughts and problem solve

Provide academic support/accommodations to help them during times of stress



Oppositional problems

Students with oppositional problems may

- Challenge class rules
 - Refuse to do assignments
 - Argue or fight with other students
 - Argue with the teacher
 - Deliberately try to provoke people
 - Disobey rules and directions
 - Intentionally create conflict with peers
 - Blame others for their actions and behaviours
 - Interpret motives and behaviours of others negatively
 - Seek revenge for perceived wrongs
 - Lose their temper
- 



Case 9: Hamad, a 17-year-old boy

Hamad's teachers describe him as very difficult. He refuses to follow instructions and appears to enjoy defying authority, whether of his teachers or parents. His school attendance is erratic. On many days he doesn't turn up.

His parents report that he hangs out with "a bad group of kids" and they have caught him smoking marijuana. They suspect he may be using other drugs and he has admitted to his school counsellor that he and a group of friends have stolen money from a local store.

When he is at school he frequently gets into physical fights with other students and was suspended a few times for bringing a knife to school.



Questions to consider ?


What strategies could be implemented **by the teacher** to support **Hamad**?

What strategies could be implemented **by parents** to support **Hamad**?

What strategies could be implemented **by peers** to support **Hamad**?

Who else could support **Hamad** and how?


When would you refer **Hamad** to a **specialist**?



Troubling behaviour
you might see in
the classroom


Intervention

T=Teacher
P=Parent
F=Friends




Refusal

- | | |
|---|-------|
| Provide the student a few appropriate choices ("You can do this work during lunch" or "I'll help you now do the first problem now") | T,P |
| Use "I need you" rather than "You need to" in statements | T,P |
| Use consistent cues, words, and signals to identify inappropriate behaviour. State what you want instead of what you do not want. Model politeness ("Please walk down the hall on the right side seeing if you can be the quietest you've ever been") | T,P,F |
| Think through the student's alternatives and likely consequences when refusal occurs and allow the student to consider and choose options | T,P |
| Acknowledge the student's frustration or disappointment when something doesn't go as they want and then invite the student to figure out another solution for now | T,P |
| Identify the student's good efforts even if the results are not successful | T,P |
| Focus on fixing problems rather than who is to blame and reward collaborative efforts between the student and others | T,P,F |
| Have students describe how they think others feel when a conflict occurs | TPF |
| Have students role play how to resolve conflicts | T,P,F |



Troubling behaviour
you might see in
the classroom

Intervention



T=Teacher
P=Parent
F=Friends

Refusal

Confront lies/distortions outside of class

T,P

Allow the student to correct mistakes or misdeeds

T,P

Identify a “time out” space in the classroom where the student can go to calm down

T,P

Minimize escalations by speaking softly and succinctly and demonstrate patience while allowing the student to do the right things

T,P

Identify a staff member to walk or talk with the angry student to process the event outside of class

T,P

Together with parents identify prosocial events/activities and helpful peers and students with whom the student could spend more time

T,P,F

Conduct problems

Students with conduct problems may

- Engage in power struggles
- React badly to direct demands or statements such as: “you need to...” or “you must”
- Consistently challenge class rules
- Argue or fight with other students
- Refuse to do assignments



Conduct problems

Students with conduct problems may

- Create disruptions in the class
- Blame others and refuse to take responsibility
- Destroy property in the classroom
- Disrespect adults and other students
- Endanger the safety and wellbeing of others
- Steal





Case 10: Mahmoud, a 16-year-old boy

Mahmoud has a history of bullying other students.

Recently he has been targeting younger students including Hassan, an 11-year-old soft-spoken boy. Mahmoud has been chasing Hassan in the playground and has taken away his sandwich. He calls him names and has engaged in a few fights with him. He has threatened that if Hassan tells the teachers he will “get him outside of school”.





Questions to consider ?


What strategies could be implemented **by the teacher** to support **Mahmoud**?

What strategies could be implemented **by parents** to support **Mahmoud**?

What strategies could be implemented **by peers** to support **Mahmoud**?

Who else could support **Mahmoud** and how?


When would you refer **Mahmoud** to a **specialist**?



Troubling behaviour
you might see in
the classroom

Intervention

T=Teacher
P=Parent
F=Friends



Bullying

Intervene immediately: separate the children involved and make sure everyone is safe. It is OK to get another adult to help

T,P

Stay calm, listen without blaming and model respectful behaviour

T

Support children who are bullied and make sure they are safe. Rearrange classroom or bus seating plans as needed

T,P,F

Conduct classroom activities to educate about bullying (lead a class discussion about how to be a good friend, write a story about the effects of bullying or benefits of teamwork, role play a scenario, read a book about the topic)

T,F

Involve students in sports and clubs to enable them to take leadership roles and make friends without feeling the need to bully

T,P,F

Maintain open communication between the school and parents

T,P



Substance abuse

Students with a substance abuse problem may

- Be moody and irritable, and have sudden mood and personality changes
- Have low self-esteem and depression
- Pull away from family, teachers and other trusted adults
- Be argumentative and disruptive
- Break rules





Substance abuse

Students with a substance abuse problem may

- Exhibit a decline in academic performance
- Have memory and learning problems
- Demonstrate poor judgment in situations
- Be late and absent from school
- Withdraw socially





Substance abuse

Students with a substance abuse problem may

- Have problems with family and peer relationships, and exhibit a lack of empathy for others
- Engage in other risky activities
- Change former activities or friends
- Demonstrate general lack of interest





Case 11: Hazim, a 17-year-old boy

Hazim's teacher has noticed that his behaviour has changed significantly in the last two months.

Hazim used to be well-liked student who excelled academically. Recently his grades dropped significantly, he rarely attends class and when he comes he appears angry and moody which has led to several fights.

In a meeting with the school social worker Hazim admitted that he has been snorting cocaine and injecting heroin.





Questions to consider ?


What strategies could be implemented **by the teacher** to support **Hazim**?

What strategies could be implemented **by parents** to support **Hazim**?

What strategies could be implemented **by peers** to support **Hazim**?

Who else could support **Hazim** and how?


When would you refer **Hazim** to a **specialist**?



Troubling behaviour
you might see in
the classroom

Intervention

T=Teacher
P=Parent
F=Friends



Substance abuse

Improve school connectedness, which helps students with substance abuse problems, and encourage positive relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers at school

T,F

Define and enforce policies that establish school as a drug-free environment

T,P,F

Provide information and resources on substance abuse

T,P

Clarify if certain activities (sports, drama, etc.) can help occupy the student's time in a meaningful way

T,P,F

If available, consider a recovery school for severe cases

T,P

Encourage the student to engage with substance free peers and settings

T,P,F

Thank you

