

Diagnosing Children: Some Considerations

I. Wider scope of assessment:

1. Child Report: accuracy, extent?
2. Parent Report: limited to home; awareness/articulate concerns; Family systems; Roles; Discipline style; attachment quality; emotionality; expectations, level of support/guidance, parent pathology, psychiatric hx.
3. School Report: Teachers' feedback, Grade records, Psychoeducational Assessment/identification disability; SED status; Modifications made in classroom
4. Medical Report: Health concerns (asthma, ear infections, hearing/vision); functional impairments; Developmental Difficulties (motor fx, cognitive fx, language fx); hx of any birth or genetic defects – cerebral palsy, chromosomal abnormalities); Medications having behavioral side effects (steroids; inhalers; cough medicine); childhood intensive medical tx – cancer tx

II. Most Common referral to mental health professional:

Preschool Age: Aggression

Grade School Age: Inattention/Impulsivity

III. ADHD Dx:

1. Child Developmental Expectations:
 - When is it pathological: age of presentation matters
 - Structured setting most indicative: difficulty in inhibiting behaviors
 - What else can explain the impulsivity or distractibility in a child????
2. When is it pathological?
 - Outside of developmental norms
 - Functional impairment
3. **When is it ADHD and not another mental health condition or a situational issue?**

A. Compare and contrast criteria for the following with ADHD criteria:

Intermittent Explosive Disorder

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Conduct Disorder

Anxiety Disorder (Panic or GAD)

Learning Disability (Auditory processing or Visual processing issues)

Vision or Hearing Concerns

Communication Disorder (Articulation or Expressive/Receptive Language Disorder)

Autism

PTSD

Sleep Disturbances (situational) or Disorder

Other Notable Clinical Notes: (Family)

Parental Antisocial behavior not associated with child ADHD

Parental Pathology associated with ODD and Conduct, not ADHD

Maternal Depr associated with child ADHD

ODD associated with less parental positivity and family warmth, high family conflict

Maternal emotional dysregulation assoc with child ADHD

Inappropriate expectations associated with Depression in children with ADHD

Lack of parental supervision assoc with Conduct d/o