

# **SOCIAL SKILLS: INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS**

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## SOCIAL SKILLS DEFINED

“Social skills are the specific behaviors when interacting with others.”

Social skill deficiency is a defining characteristic of emotional and behavioral disorders.



# SOCIAL SKILLS DEFINED

Disorders that show an impairment in social skills:

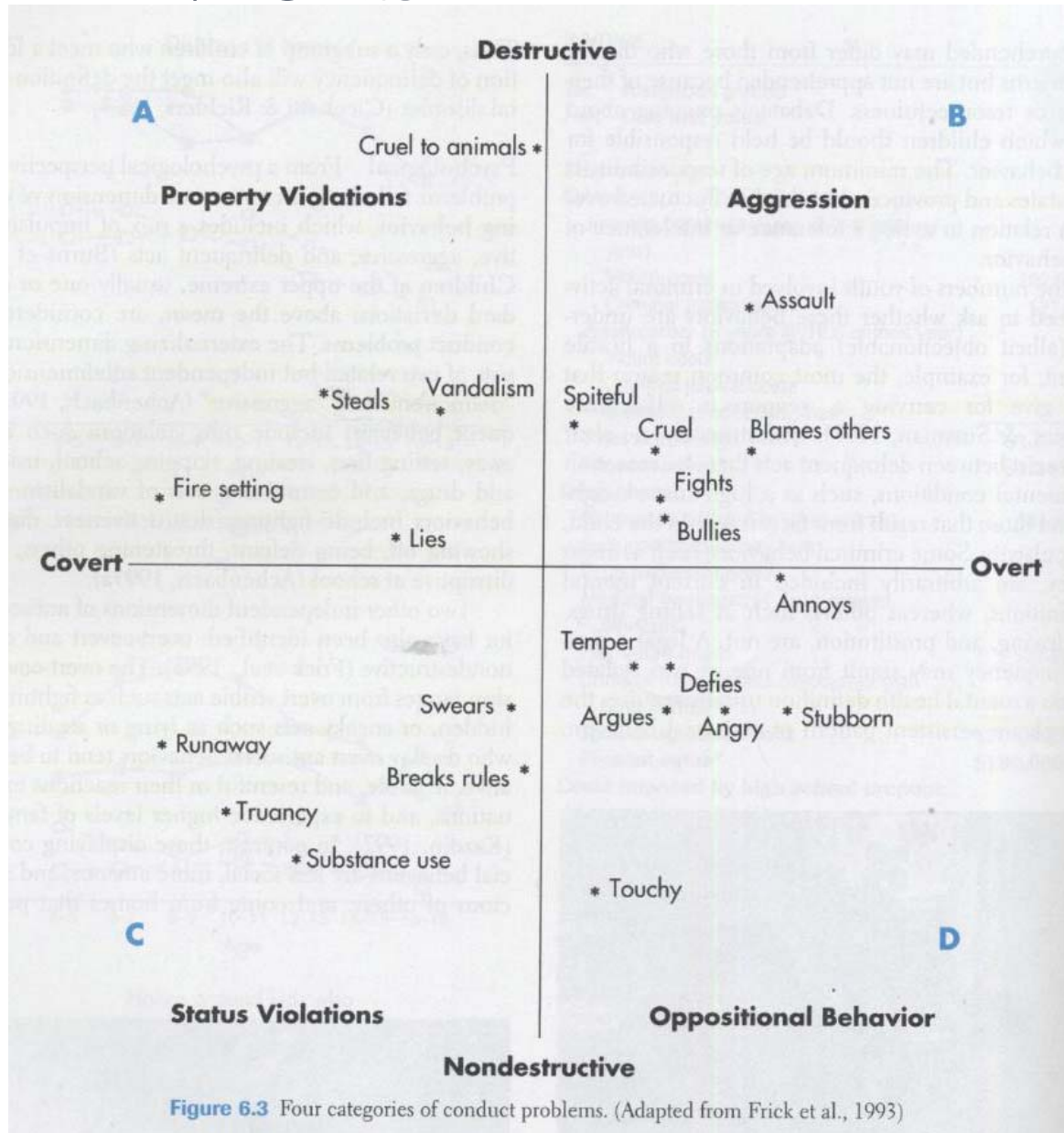
- Conduct Problems
- Mood Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)
- Learning Disabilities



(Rutherford et al., 2004)



# EXAMPLES OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIORS



(Mash & Wolfe, 2002)



# RISK FACTORS – GENETICS

- Twin studies show that a disposition to become anxious is inherited
- Studies also show children may inherit a vulnerability for depression
- 1/3 of immediate and extended family members of children with AD/HD are also likely to have symptoms
- A major cause of autism is biologically based neurodevelopmental disorders
- Subtle inherited brain dysfunctions can lead to learning disorders



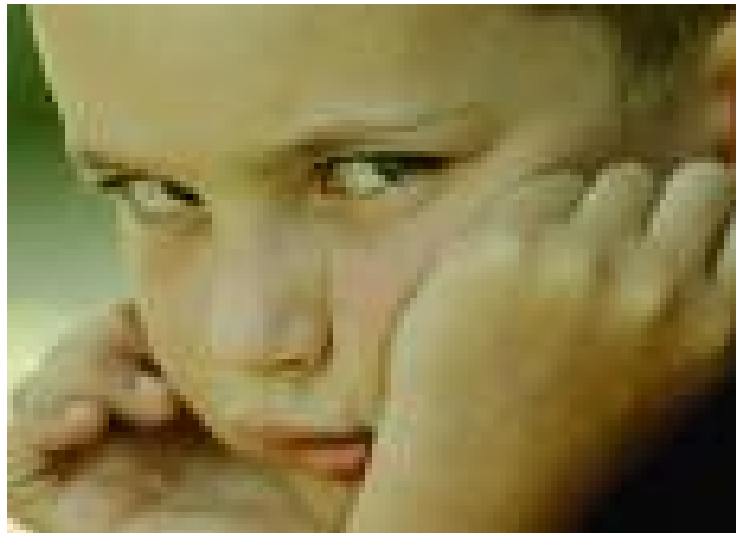
# RISK FACTORS – GENETICS

- Children with conduct problems show lower verbal IQ than performance IQ
  - A specific and pervasive language deficit may affect receptive listening, reading, problem solving, expressive speech and writing, or memory for verbal material
  - These deficits may in turn interfere with development of self-control or an ability to label emotions in others, which may lead to a lack of empathy



# RISK FACTORS – PERSONALITY

- Early difficult temperament puts children at risk of developing later conduct problems
- Shy-inhibited temperament is a risk factor for anxiety
- Children with deficient emotional regulation are at risk for developing depression

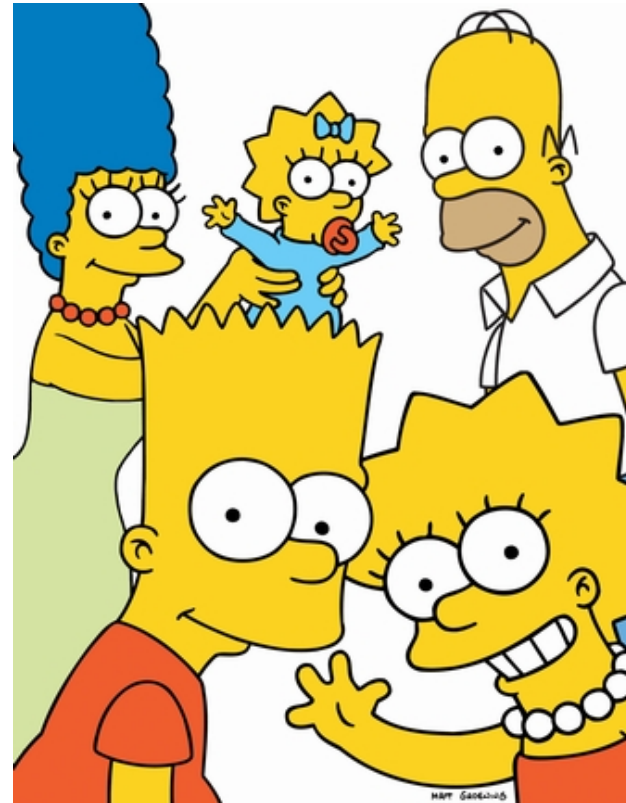


(Mash & Wolfe, 2002)



# RISK FACTORS – FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

- Family problems are among the strongest and most consistent correlates of antisocial behavior
- Types of family risk factors:
  - General family disturbances
  - Specific disturbances in parenting practices and family functioning
  - Both are highly interrelated
  - Low SES increases risk



(Mash & Wolfe, 2002)



# RISK FACTORS – ADOLESCENCE

- Cognitive Characteristics
  - Formal operational thought processes including hypothetical thoughts and ability to analyze possibilities
  - Self-awareness including tendencies toward egocentrism
  - Belief in invincibility fable and imaginary audience
- Influence of peers on increase of antisocial behaviors
  - 52% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 80% of high school seniors have drunk alcohol
  - 44% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 66% of high school seniors have smoked a cigarette
  - 22% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have tried marijuana, 41% of high school seniors have tried at least one illegal drug
  - 2/3 of all recorded youth offenses were committed with 2-3 peers

# RISK FACTORS – ADOLESCENCE

Increased risk for mental health disorders

<u>Disorder</u>	<u>Prevalence</u>	<u>Average Onset</u>
<u>Anorexia nervosa</u>	<u>0.5-1%</u>	<u>14-18 years</u>
<u>Bulimia</u>	<u>1-3%</u>	<u>late adolescence</u>
<u>Adolescent-Limited Conduct Disorder</u>	<u>2-6%</u>	<u>peaks at 17 years</u>
<u>Generalized Anxiety Disorder</u>	<u>3-6%</u>	<u>10-14 years</u>
<u>Depression</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>15-19 years</u>
<u>Suicide Attempts</u>	<u>30% of those with depression</u>	<u>first attempt: 13-14 years</u>

(Mash & Wolfe, 2002)



# POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL SKILL DEFICIENCIES

- Students who are lacking social skills are at risk for:
  - Aggression
  - Peer rejection
  - Loneliness
  - Social dissatisfaction
  - Academic failure
  - School drop-out
  - Contact with the legal system
  - Substance abuse
  - Difficulty maintaining employment and relationships



(Maag, 2006; Rutherford, et al., 2004)



# SOCIAL SKILL INTERVENTIONS

- Social skill instruction should be a component of a group of interventions for students who exhibit internalizing and externalizing behaviors
  - Behavior Interventions
    - Primary (Whole School)
    - Secondary (Group)
    - Tertiary (Function Based)
  - Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
  - Interpersonal Therapy
  - Medical Interventions
  - Group and Individual Counseling

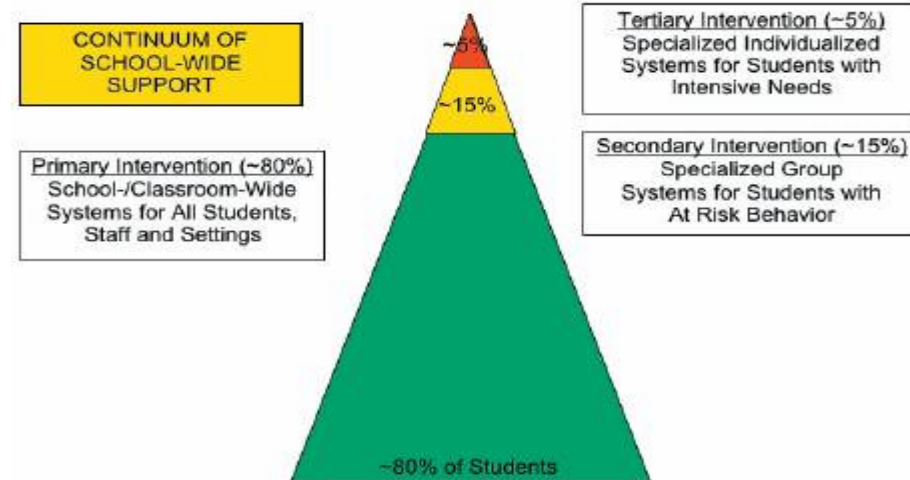
(Bullis et al., 2001)



# SOCIAL SKILL INSTRUCTION – PROGRAMS

- Programs for adolescent aged students
  - SkillStreaming the Adolescent
  - W.A.G.E.S.
  - Second Step
  - The Social Skill Intervention Guide

- Program Use
  - Targeted
  - Universal



(Bullis et al., 2001)

# SOCIAL SKILL INSTRUCTION – RATING SCALES AND ASSESSMENTS

- Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, Second Edition (BERS-2)
  - (Epstein)
- Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)
  - (Gresham and Elliot)
- SkillStreaming
  - (McGinnis and Goldstein)



# SOCIAL SKILL INSTRUCTION – WHAT TO INCLUDE

- The Steps Involved Vary Depending on the Program
- Social Skill Instruction may include:
  - Definition and Guided Instruction
  - Identifying Situations when the Skill may be used
  - Both Positive and Negative Examples (Modeling)
  - Role Playing
  - Performance Feedback and Reinforcement for Skill use
  - Strategies for Transfer
- Social Skill Instruction in high school should include job related social skills

# SOCIAL SKILL INSTRUCTION – TRANSFER AND SELF MONITORING

- Transfer of Social Skills does not always occur
  - Multiple periods in middle school/high school may make transfer more problematic (Rutherford, et al., 2004)
- Self Monitoring
  - Self monitoring of social skill use may be a viable intervention in middle school and high school
    - Research supports the use of self monitoring with teacher matching for middle school students (Lloyd et al., 2006)





# SOCIAL SKILL INSTRUCTION – EFFECTS

## ○ Effects of Social Skill Instruction

- Power Ratings
  - Prosocial Behavior = Small
  - Problem Behavior = Small
  - Specific Behaviors
    - Anxiety = Medium
    - Adjustment = Small
    - Cooperation = Small
    - Interaction = Small
    - Self-Concept = Small
    - Aggression = Small



(Rutherford, et al., 2004)



# VIDEO EXAMPLE

- The child in this video is listing several examples of antisocial behaviors
- He is also demonstrating a teacher's attempt at using the operant conditioning principal of positive punishment
- The punishment is ineffective. This child may benefit from social skill instruction
- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1610270964458187900&q=bart+simpson&total=366&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0>



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