

## **Dr. Beattie – Behavioral and Emotional Disorders Continued- Transcript**

So we talked about two broad categories, externalizing and internalized. Let's move forward and look at more specific characteristics of not just externalizing and internalizing behaviors but others as well. Now as we shifted from the broad perspective of characteristics. As has been mentioned in the state criteria as well as the general criteria, difficulty in school must be present. School achievement has to be a factor that is involved and as I think we said last week what happens with this population those inappropriate behaviors are those that lead to the individual student having difficulty with academic work. Inappropriate behavior almost always leads to poor academic achievement. Not 100% of the time but there is almost always some difficulty. As it says at the bottom, even if the kid is bright achievement is low. Regardless of the ability that the students have the behavior problems override what happens with the kid to cause them to have academic difficulty. School achievement is one of the most consistent characteristics we see. The academic difficulties are caused by the behaviors not a learning disability. Just a couple of additional things as far as the impact it has on the kids with behavior disorders.

### \_Slide 1\_

Significant impact, 30% of student with behavior emotional disorders are at or above grade level. This population has highest absenteeism of any group of students in schools in general and as many as 48% of this population will drop out of high school.

### \_Slide 2\_ Characteristics (continued)

A second characteristic involves as we have suggested earlier social skills and interpersonal relationships. These are kids who have a hard time making friends and an additionally difficult time keeping friends if they make them. We have talked about the definition and some of the things that exist within internalizing and externalizing. They have difficulties with friends because they don't understand why they do what they do and that what they do is necessarily a bad thing. If they hit or yell at you that is a standard procedure for them. It is real hard for them to make friends and it is hard for someone to be a friend to them if it does exist.

### \_Slide 3\_ Possible Causes

Shift a little bit and look at possible causes of behavior disorders. The first broad cause are biological factors. Although it is usually to determine or identify any type of organic injury or any type of organic disease. If there is that biological connection, element in place, most people in the field suggest that it predisposes the kid to specific types of behavior problems. Kids have something that may trigger a response, it isn't the direct cause but it is a factor in increasing the chance that a behavioral disorder might show itself. The big thing is that there is no evidence that a biological factor may predispose a kid to certain problems.

### \_Slide 4\_ Causes (continued)

Next broad category is environmental factors. This is one of those things that I hope for a majority is a no brainer. The events in a child's life with have a dramatic impact on patterns of behavior and other parts of a kid's life. Kids who come from aggressive environments are more aggressive in school. The majority of people in this room have as models appropriate behavior models. As stuff goes bad this is what you do when this happens, this is how you react. The behavior pattern is the exception rather than the rule. Kids in aggressive environments are constantly exposed to that aggressive reaction or response. You did this, here is the aggressive punishment. Getting hit instead of going to time out. I talked about working with a kid who saw his father shoot his mother, that aggression in that environment is what that kid will have to deal with for the rest of his life. The environmental factors are huge.

#### \_Slide 5\_ Causes Continued

We look at the influence of the home and once again the dramatic impact that everyone relationships with their parents has when the kid goes to school. The relationship is key. Parents who are inconsistent in discipline, interaction with kids often lead those kids to develop antisocial behavior. Similar results meaning that antisocial behavior shows itself with parents who punish excessively, spend little time with their child, and show little love or affections. The kids will suffer the consequences in a social environment. If kids are punished for everything they react negatively and the most insignificant negative presented to them. Parents that don't spend enough time with their kids open there kids up to numerous things that they wouldn't be opened to if they only spent more time. Love and affections, parents who give you that have dramatic positive results. You all know this, it is all logical to you. If you haven't had this you understand the impact. It is important to remind parents of what they need to be doing at home.

#### \_Slide 6\_ Causes Continued

We move from home environment to the individual's community. The peer group that the kid is involved with becomes very important. Most have parents who tell you not to hang out with certain people.

#### \_Slide 7\_ Causes Continued

As educators we play an important role in the behavior patterns kids develop. Kids with behavior disorders are often identified in school because parents don't recognize a potential problem or something dramatically wrong. Issues become significant at school and it is important for us to pay attention to the degree that school contributes to the problem. Some students don't recognize that they are doing anything wrong and there are some teachers who believe actions are beyond appropriate in a classroom. You can certainly contribute to the problem so find out what is going on with that kid and accommodate that kid's behavior.

#### \_Slide 8\_ Teacher Considerations

Let's look at what we can, should do, and be aware of when we work with this population. When we talked about kids with mental disabilities we talked about the fact that the majority of people would not work with kids with severe mental disabilities and similarly people in this room won't work with kids with severe behavior disorders but you are gonna have a kid with a behavior disorder in some size, shape or form regardless if this student has been identified as having one. These are just some things that I think generically apply to a classroom setting. The first is to look beyond the behavior and see the real kid inside. I acknowledge that I live in a pretty optimistic world even though the world tends to not be that way; it is still difficult to see the kid who is inside that aggravating behavior that he exhibits. In most cases that kid really isn't any different except their family life sucks or whatever else might be going on. If you find out what is going on inside you can make a dramatic difference on what is going on with that kid. There are a whole bunch of things in life that feel good, getting to a kid like this feels really good. Changing a kid's path is why we do what we do. Once again focus your intervention on variables on things in that kid's life that can be changed. You can't change what the kid has seen, but you need to look at things that can change what that kid does later on. Focus on things that can change. This is easy to say but difficult to do. You must be tough and think skinned with the population but let them know you care about what happens to them. They will say stuff just to say it and get a reaction. Sometimes you have to ignore it and must try to get to the kid and still be there regardless of what they are saying.

A tight structured classroom with explicit rules. The more work I do in schools, the more I see and hear about the more this is for all kids. A tight structured classroom suggests that there are rules and that they are established as a class and will be implemented. If today there is something okay, it is okay tomorrow. Wrong today and still wrong tomorrow. The rules must be applied appropriately and consistently.

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Regardless of how good your intervention program is there are going to be circumstances of kids that don't respond or react or follow the techniques you are using. You will need to be able to do alternative things. Establish a contract with the kid of the expectations and behaviors that should be exhibited. If you exhibit the behaviors you will get this and if you don't this will happen and the more it carries to the home the better it is. Not all kids respond to the traditional punishment and reinforcement systems.

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There are a lot of people who don't believe this statement. With as much sincerity I can say to you I hope that none of you believe this statement for kids in general. You can teach kids to behave appropriately just like you can teach them to read, do math, or anything else. If you don't believe that you can change behaviors in kids you are truly in the wrong profession. We

are about changing behaviors academically, socially, emotionally and in many other ways. It is important that you don't lose sight of that.

Evaluate all the time. Keep track, keep a record of what your kids do. How often they do whatever it is. When they exhibit that behavior, other kids they exhibit it with. As you collect that information it can have a dramatic impact on what you choose to do with that kid. If you have the kid that fights another kid it isn't rocket science that you shouldn't have them close to each other in a classroom. Be aware of when they do that. I observed a teacher who was having issue with a couple of kids and after lunch they did a reading activity. The kids she wanted me to look at why they all over the place and doing stuff they shouldn't have. After I observed, we talked about what might be going on as far as the cause of the behavior. If you have eaten in a school cafeteria every carbohydrate is given to students to eat. They have pizza with corn and chocolate milk with a cinnamon bun. We tell them to sit and pay attention after lunch. Instead of sitting them down, let them go outside and do a nature walk.

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The more I do this the more convinced I am that one of the reasons behaviors don't change is because we don't give them the opportunity or time to change. It takes time to change behaviors like it takes time to teach other skills. Kids don't learn to read in one day, they won't learn to behave differently or appropriately in one day. It will take time, be aware of that.