

The Role of Temperament in Challenging Behavior: What you need to know

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The 4 Main Points

1. Challenging behaviors have lots of causes
2. Temperament is one: 10 traits
3. Secondary Problems
4. Accommodations and teaching Self-Control

Challenging Behavior Problems

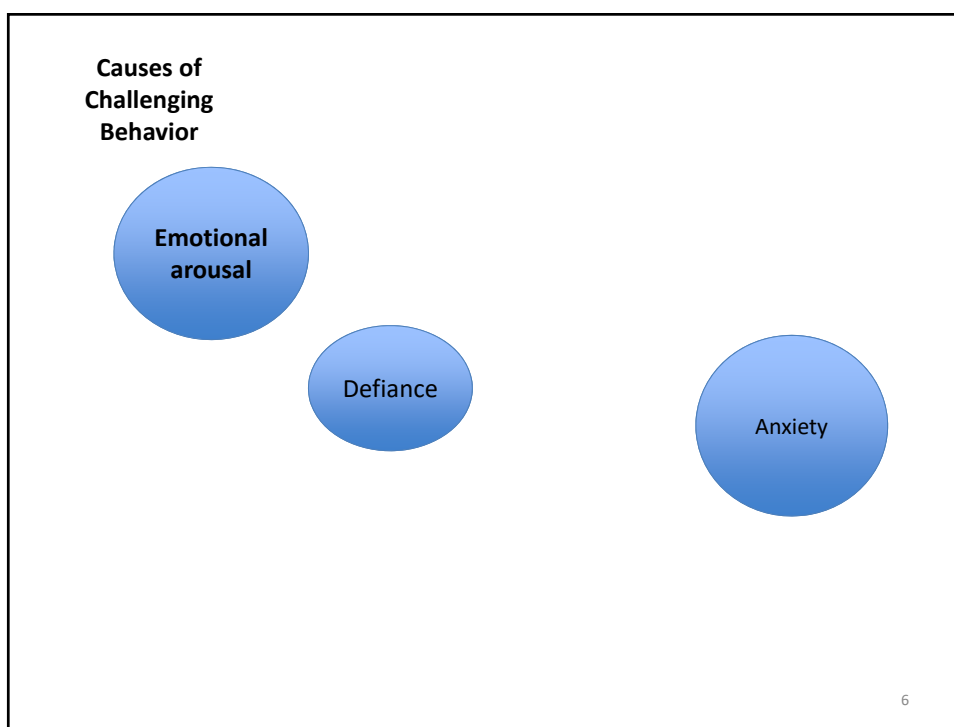
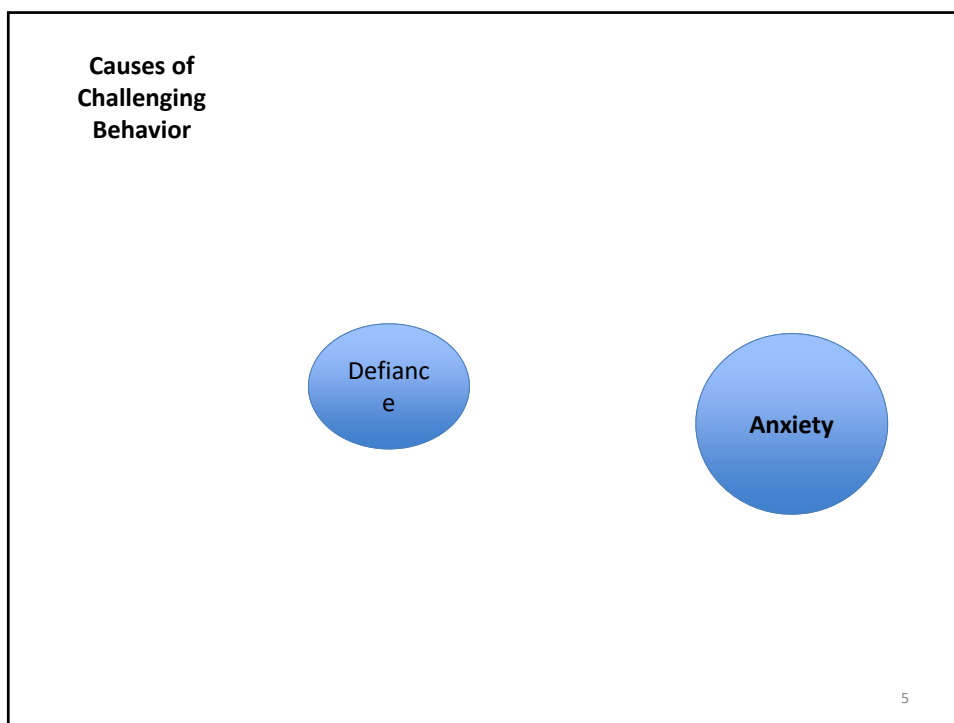
- Is this a “thing”?
- Does knowing what kind of behavior problem you are faced with help you know what to do?
- Can you figure out what the “cause” of the behavior problem is during a clinical interview?

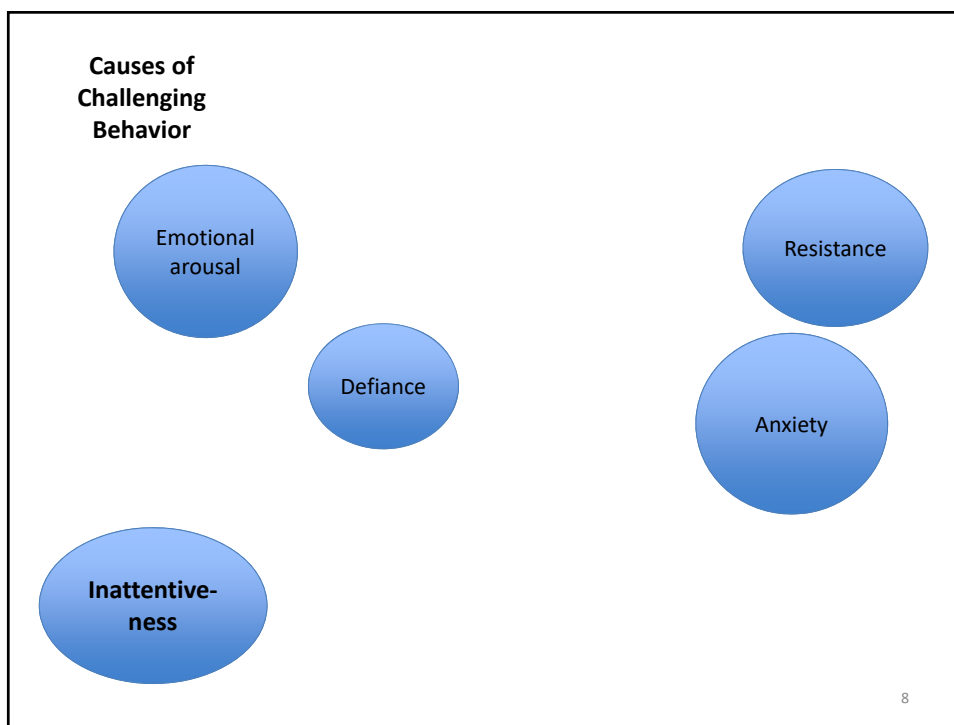
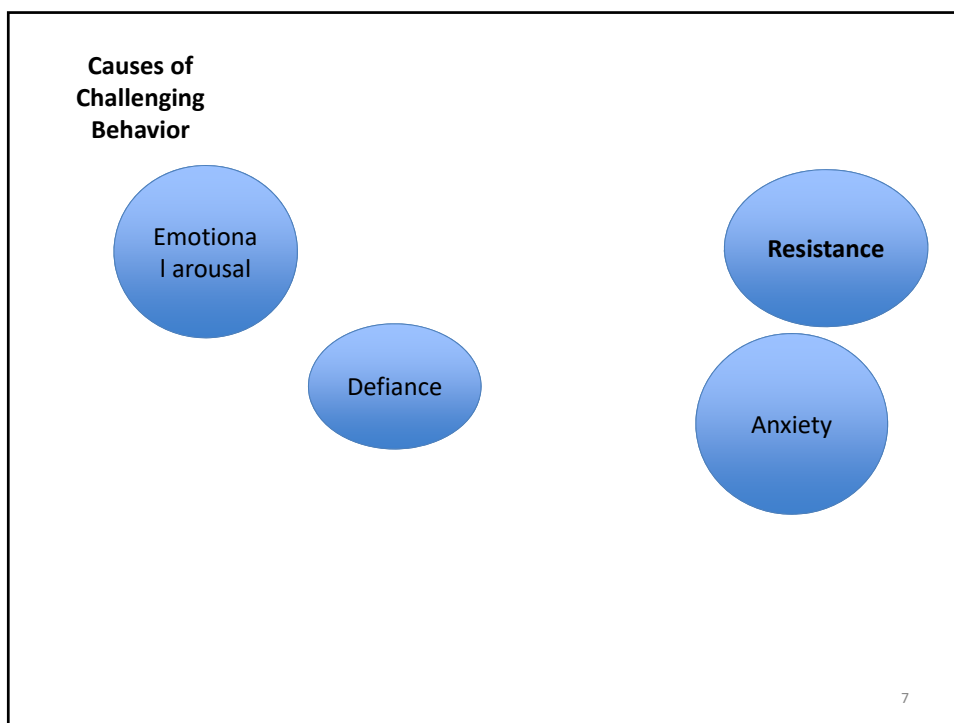
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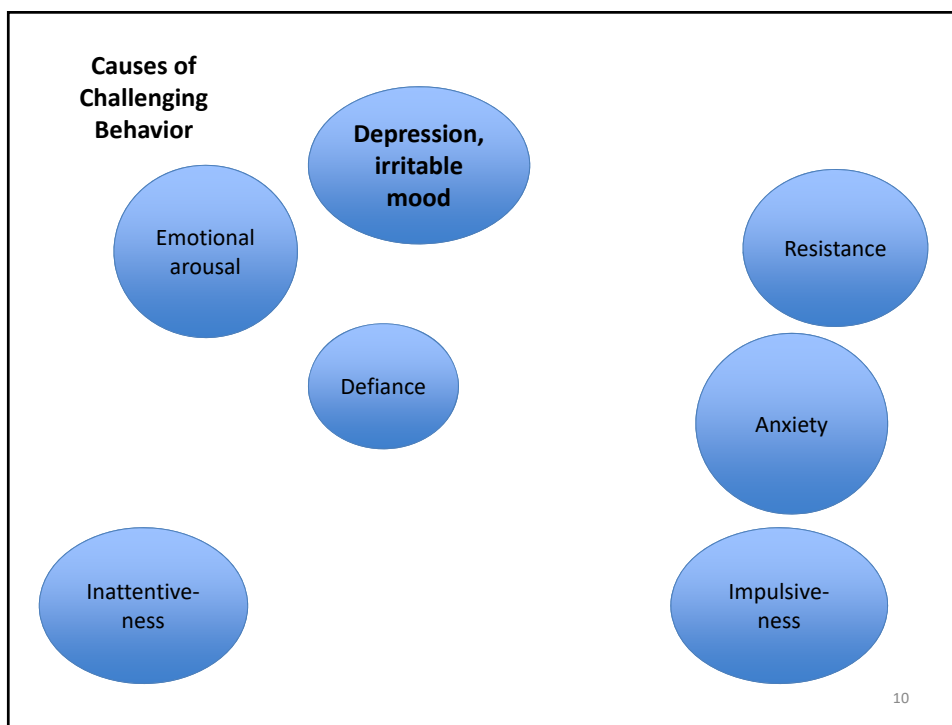
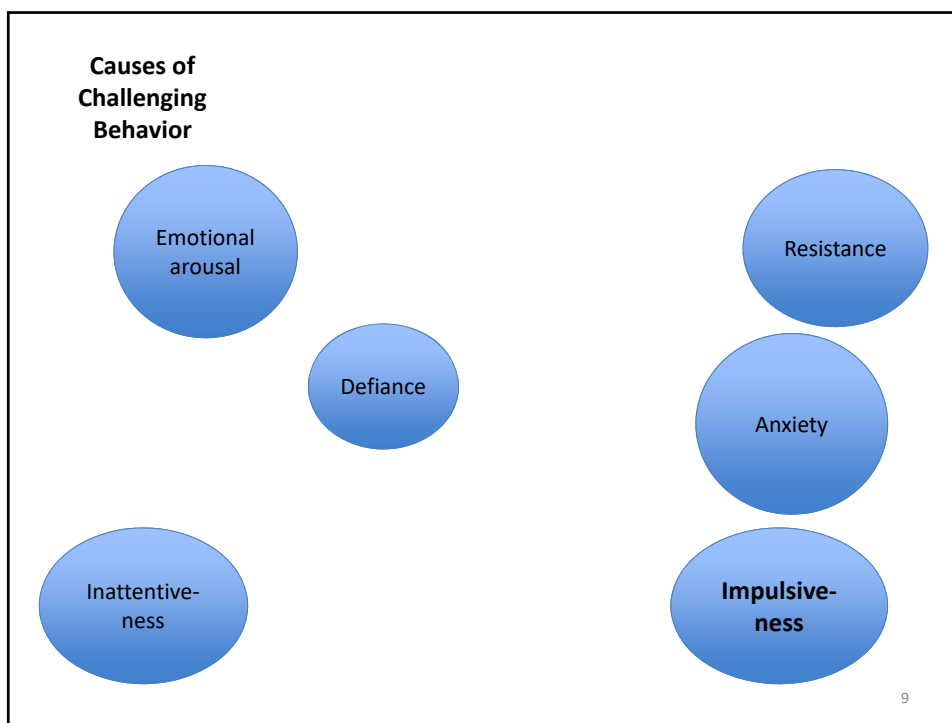
**Causes of
Challenging
Behavior**

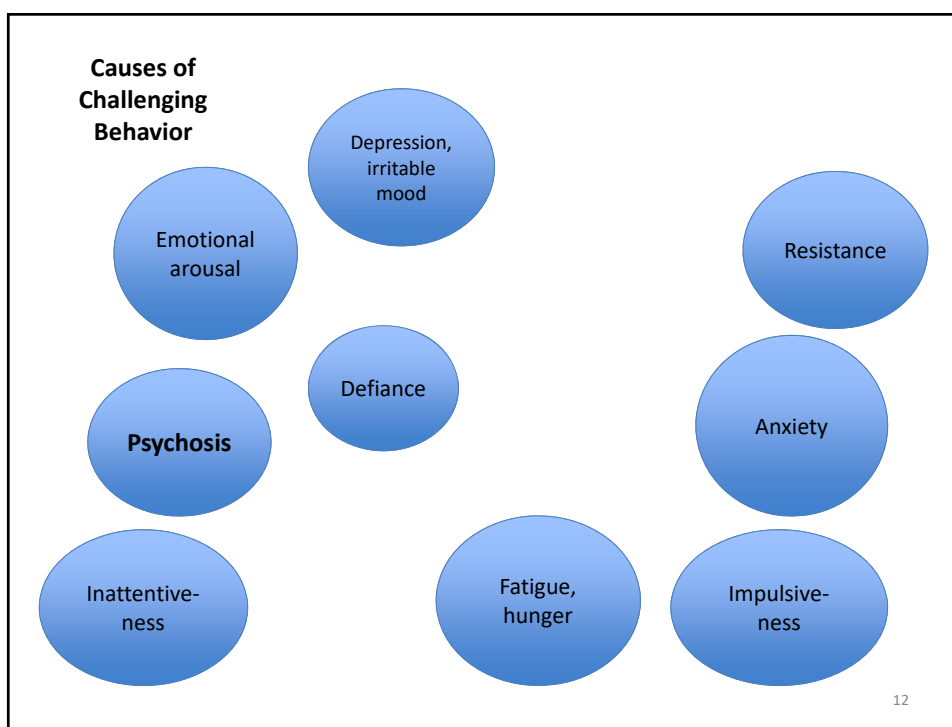
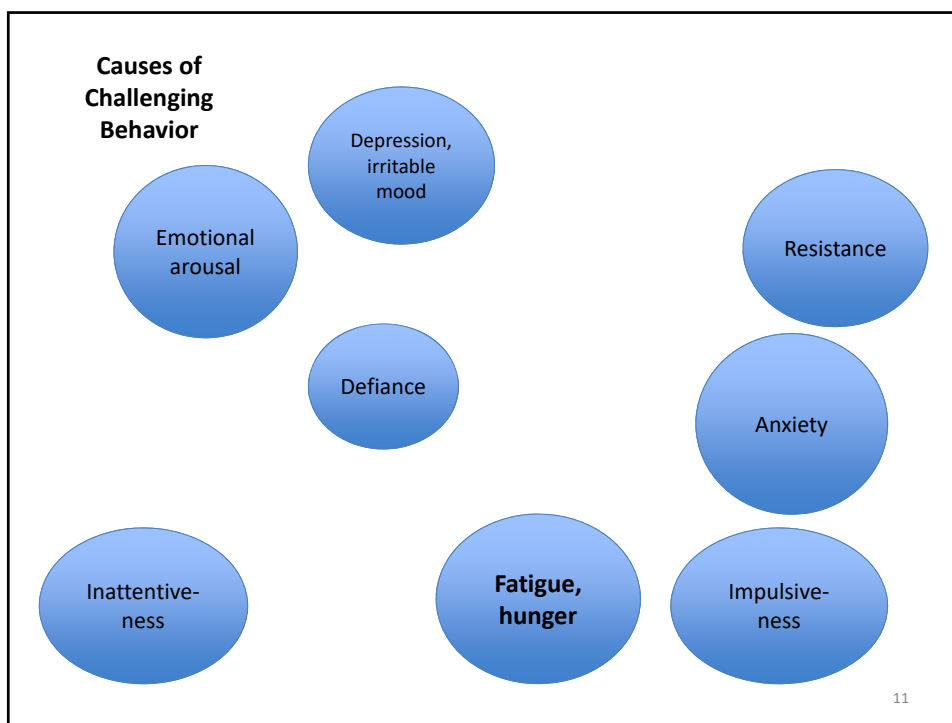


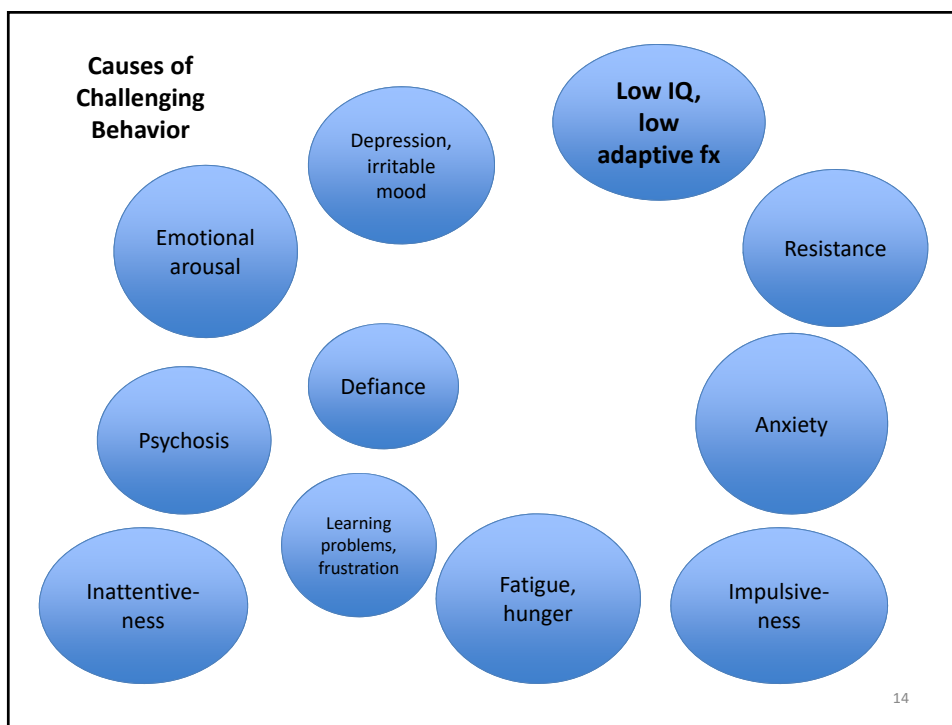
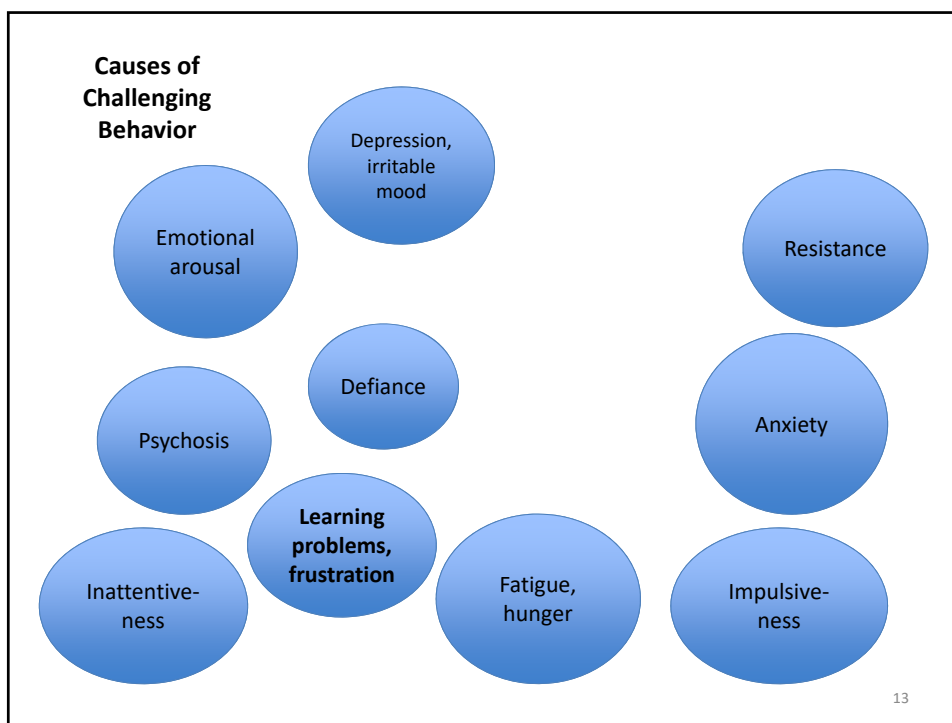
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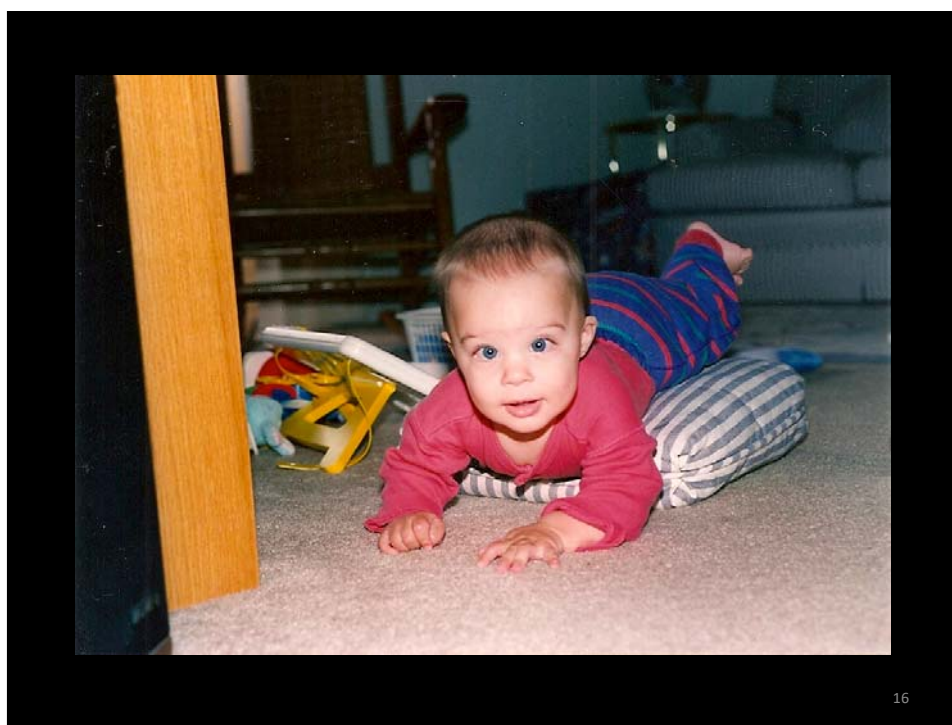
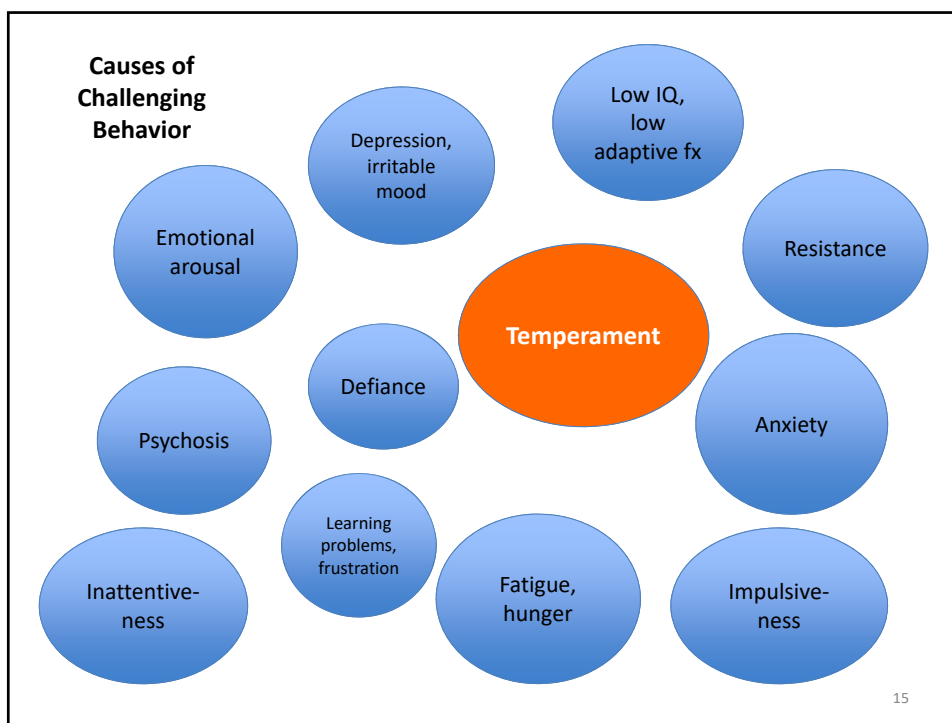














Different
Causes

need

Different
interventions

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A Case

I have underlined the Temperamental
Symptoms, I have used parentheses
on the other symptoms

Temperament- what is it?

- Biological beginnings of your personality- like “shyness”
- Made up of 10 factors
- Factors can change, but not quickly
- The factors can cause problem if there is a “mismatch”
- The problems can cause “secondary problems”

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Types of Temperament Problems

(categories of temperament)

- High activity level
- Distractibility
- Impulsivity
- High intensity of emotions
- Irregular body rhythms
- Negative persistence
- Abnormal sensory threshold
- Rigid response to new situations
- Poor adaptability to change
- Negative mood
- Handouts!

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High Activity Level

- Very active, more than other kids
- Fidgety, restless
- Always into things, makes you tired
- Easily over-stimulated
- Can become aggressive

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Distractibility, Concentration

- Trouble concentrating and paying attention
- Doesn't listen
- Daydreams
- Forgetful, misses instructions

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Impulsivity

- Acting before you think
- Grabbing, interrupting, intruding
- Repeats mistakes, seems not to learn from experience
- Little self reflection or “self talk”

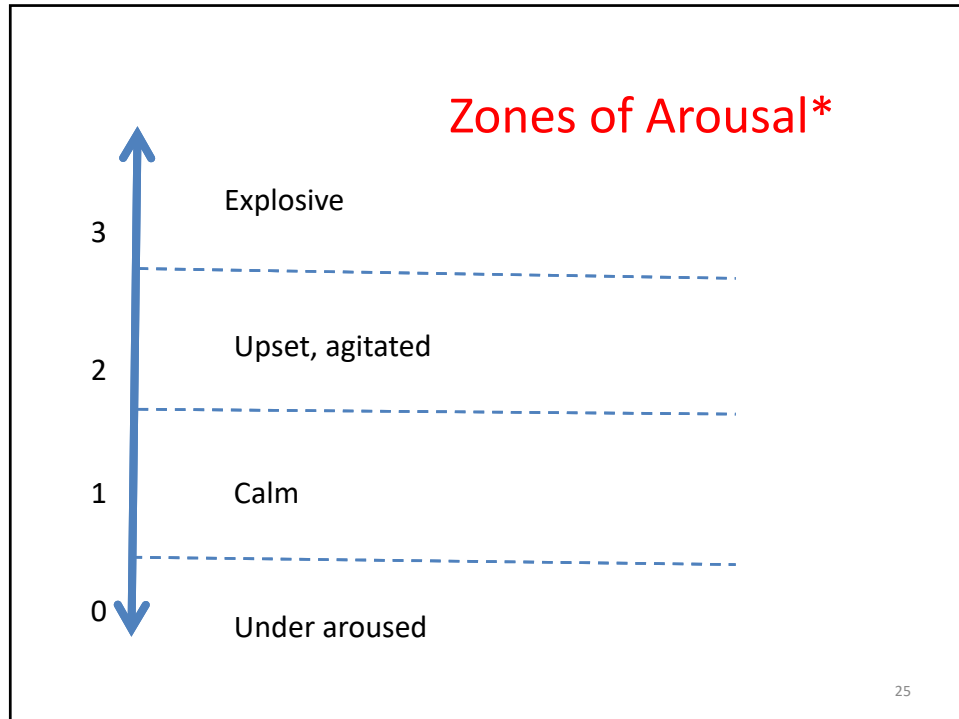
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High Intensity of Emotions

- Loud and forceful Emotions
- Overwhelming to others
- Emotional reaction out of proportion to events

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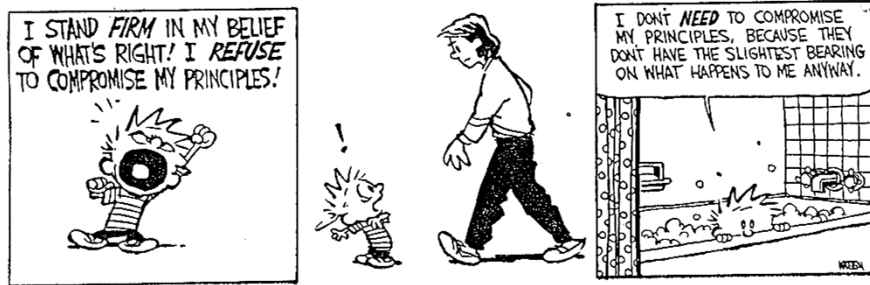


Body Rhythm Irregularity

- Unpredictable **appetite**
- Difficulty falling **asleep**
- Kid can't tell when he/she is **tired, hungry**
- Moods can be **changeable** for no good reason
- Good or bad days for no good reason
- **Bowel habits** can be irregular

*It is as if their internal regulator is off, or has a loose wire

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Negative Persistence

- Stubborn
- Nags, whines, negotiates, relentless
- Gets “locked in”, spun up
- Won't give up even if you up the punishment

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Abnormal Sensory Threshold

- Physically sensitive to...
 - Tastes
 - Sounds
 - Textures (on skin, in mouth)
 - Smells
- Not as sensitive to...
 - Temperature
 - Pain

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Rigid Response to New Situations

- Overly shy or reserved in new situations
 - Birthday parties
 - Holidays
 - New classroom

OR

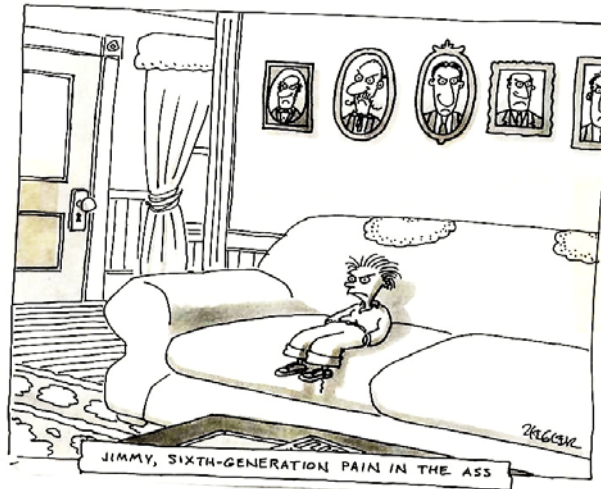
- Overly active and forward
 - Inappropriately wild or curious and exploring in new settings
 - Can't calm self and wait for clarification of group's activity

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Poor Adaptability to Change

- Troubles with transitions and change of routine
 - Classroom
 - Substitute teachers
- Inflexible, gets used to things and hates to change
 - After school patterns
 - Friday Night routine
- Wants same clothes, food all the time
 - Mushroom soup for breakfast
 - Same shirt, shorts, pants all the time

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Negative Mood

- 'Grumpy bear' more often than not
- Hates to be hugged except when they ask for it
- Doesn't show pleasure very much; serious

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The Secondary Problems

By themselves, temperamental traits,
like shyness, don't have to cause
problems.

Temperamental Mismatch: What is this?

The ability of the Holding Environment
to provide the necessary
accommodation for the child

The Mismatches

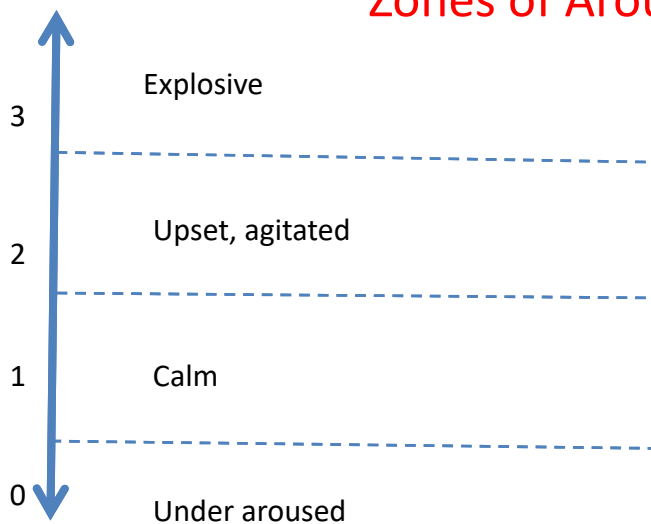
- Outgoing Mom and shy child
- Shy, proper Mom and difficult child
- Situations that require normal temperament and self control but have low structure, cueing and rehearsal
 - Line up before school, lunch
 - The time just before and just after soccer practice
- Low structure/high stimulation environments
 - Recess

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Associated Problems

Excessive arousal and dangerous
behavior
Social problems
Anxiety

Zones of Arousal



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Social Problems Associated with Temperament

- Knowledge
- Contract
 - Quid pro quo
 - Golden rule
- Awareness
- Social Justice

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Anxiety and Temperament

- Separation anxiety
- Obsessive rumination
- Generalized Anxiety
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

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The Tertiary Problems

Incorrect diagnosis, ineffective
treatment

Parent/child relationship

Parental relationship

Relationship with relatives

Bonus Material

Managing Temperamental Challenges

- Principles
 - Attitude
 - Neutral
 - Informing
 - Intellectual not emotional
 - Use planned actions
 - Label the challenge
 - Have your intervention ready
 - Don't punish
 - Recognize the signs (earlier the better)
 - Intervene

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How to Change Temperamental Challenges

- Helping your child adjust
 - During a non-stressful time talk with him/her about their temperament
 - Compare family members (humor's good)
 - Discuss things that really set them off and ask for their ideas on how to be less "set off"

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- High Activity Level
 - Be clear on the signs
 - Label it- “my child gets too revved up”
 - Choose between “cool down” or “blow off steam” activity ahead of time
 - Cool down- take a bath, watch a video, get an ice cream cone
 - Blow off steam- game of tag, wrestle, dig hole in the yard
 - Watch for effects of your intervention and adjust

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Distractibility, concentration
 - Label the challenge- “my child has a hard time paying attention”
 - Turn off more interesting stimuli
 - Eye contact
 - Give message- short and simple
 - Check up on them in a kind way
 - Turn on the more interesting stuff

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Impulsivity, self control

- Remember she/he is “my child who acts first before thinking”
- Use cues and mental rehearsal, even in vivo practice, to prepare them
 - Experience will guide you on which situations are trouble
 - Plan ahead
 - Avoid opportunities for impulses (someone else’s BD party)

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- High Intensity of Emotions
 - Label the problem- “my child has big emotions/loud voice”
 - Express empathy- “I know this is disappointing for you...”
 - Kindly encourage them to try to decrease the volume
 - Remind them they will feel better in a little while
- DO NOT “THROW GASOLINE ON THE FIRE”

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Irregular body rhythms
 - Label the problem- “my child isn’ t always tired at bedtime”
 - Separate “bedtime” from the concept of “sleep time”
 - Enforce the part that is under their control, don’ t sweat the other
 - Goal for them is to stay in their room after a certain time

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Negative Persistence
 - Label the problem- “my child gets stuck and can’ t stop”
 - Bring the episode to an end quickly
 - Tell them, kindly, that “I know it is hard for you to stop, but you can say your point 2 more times and then you’ ll have to stop”
 - Afterwards (when they cool down), you can correct any errors (if any) you made by stopping the conversation too soon

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Abnormal Sensory Threshold
 - Label the problem- “my child hates to wear certain fabrics”
 - Avoid the fabrics
 - Must fight your need to have this child cooperate to satisfy your need (dress a certain way, eat certain foods, remain around certain sounds)

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Poor Adaptability
 - Label the problem- “my child has problems with change”
 - Prepare them for transitions, irregular schedules, substitute teachers, etc
 - Practice difficult transitions ahead of time (field trips, quitting video games)
 - *Don’ t overdo it and warn for everything, just important events

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Managing Temperamental Challenges- Examples

- Negative Mood
 - Label the problem- “my child is grumpy in the morning”
 - Don’ t take their mood personally
 - If necessary, remind them (kindly) they will feel better later, or can take care of a duty later in the day

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Interventions for Temperamental Challenges

- Right intervention, right person, right time, right context

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Managing Temperamental Challenges

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Temperament Resources

- The Difficult Child- Stanley Turecki, MD
- The Explosive Child- Russell Green, Ph.D.

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