



Tips and Tactics for Working with Students with Mental Health Disorders

Category: Special Education

Workshop Overview

Following is a general overview of this workshop, including desired participant outcomes, an explanation of the workshop’s alignment with Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, and resources that are included in print and electronic form.

Category: Special Education

Duration: Full workshop – 3 hours

Desired Outcomes:

Participants will...

- Define and characterize emotional disturbance.
- Identify examples of mental health disorders.
- Describe ways to support students with emotional disturbance.
- Determine the roles of educators supporting these students.

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

- **Learning Communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- **Leadership:** Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
- **Resources:** Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
- **Data:** Uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
- **Learning Designs:** Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
- **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.
- **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Resources in This Binder:

- Handouts
 - Workshop Agenda
 - Attendee Notes
 - 3-2-1 Evaluation Form
 - Certificate of Completion
- “Think About It” Exercise
- Ready, Set, Go Planning Activity





Topic Outline

Understanding the general flow of topics to be covered is an important part of giving a strong presentation. This allows the presenter(s) to lead effective group discussions and speak extemporaneously. Following are the main topics covered in this PowerPoint presentation. As you prepare to give the workshop, you may want to refer to this page often.



Main Topics:

1. Emotional Disturbances
2. Understanding Mental Health Disorders
3. Supporting Students with Emotional Disturbances

Subtopics:

1. Emotional Disturbances

- a. Statistics Regarding Emotional Disturbances
- b. Definition of Emotional Disturbance
- c. Characteristics and Behaviors
- d. Potential Causes

2. Understanding Mental Health Disorders

- a. Bipolar Disorder
- b. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- c. Conduct Disorder
- d. Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- e. Reactive Attachment Disorder

3. Supporting Students with Emotional Disturbances

- a. Educational Programming Considerations
- b. Key Points in Determining Services
- c. Types of Support
- d. Role of the Educator
- e. Discipline Traps to Avoid

Presentation Outline



This outline is designed for you to see the PowerPoint presentation at a glance. Note that slide numbers and the approximate amount of time needed per slide are shown in the right two columns. **The times in bold print show the approximate total time needed for that topic, which includes the approximate times for the activities, shown in parentheses.** You might consider keeping this page within reach during the presentation.

Section of Presentation	Slide #	Timing (mins)
Getting Started		
Introduce self, co-teacher, participants	1-2	
Explain materials issued to participants		
Cover objectives (from Workshop Overview)	2	10
Topic 1 – Emotional Disturbances	3-10	35
Activity – Think, Pair, Share	9	(15)
Topic 2 – Understanding Mental Health Disorders	11-17	40
Activity – Quick Write	17	(25)
Break		
Topic 3 – Supporting Students with Emotional Disturbances	18-31	75
Discussion Point – How do educators provide academic support for students?	23	(5)
Discussion Point – What is the difference between behavior support and behavior management?	24	(10)
Activity – Role Play	28	(30)
Closing Thoughts	32	5
Total of 2 hours and 45 minutes (not including break)		

Helpful tip!

This workshop can be broken up into shorter sessions so that you can adapt the presentation according to your time constraints.



Slide 12

PDXPERT UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Bipolar Disorder

A disorder “that causes unusual shifts in a person’s mood, energy, and ability to function.”

-The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

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Categorized as a type of mood disorder, people with bipolar disorder often experience periods of normal mood in between mood swings. The dramatic mood swings, which range from extreme periods of highs (mania) to lows (depression), are called “episodes.” People who suffer from bipolar disorder often experience damaged relationships, poor job performance, and poor school performance.

It’s important to remember that while friends or family may recognize some of the symptoms of bipolar disorder, only a trained medical or psychiatric professional can actually diagnose bipolar disorder.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “a manic episode is diagnosed if elevated mood occurs with three or more of the [following] symptoms [for] most of the day, nearly every day, for one week or longer.”

The signs and symptoms of a manic (high) episode include the following:

- *Increased energy, activity, and restlessness.*
- *Excessively “high,” overly good, euphoric mood.*
- *Extreme irritability.*
- *Racing thoughts and talking very fast.*
- *Distractibility, lack of concentration.*
- *Poor judgment.*
- *Substance abuse.*
- *Denial that anything is wrong.*
- *Provocative, intrusive, or aggressive behavior.*

“Think About It” Exercise



Have staff complete this exercise to begin implementing what they learned during the workshop. Distribute this document to staff by attaching the file to the Next Day Follow-Up Email, or make copies for the staff.

1. Describe a possible behavior intervention that should be implemented for a student with an emotional disturbance or mental health disability whose behavior is impeding his or her learning or the learning of others.

2. Are there any aspects of working with students with emotional disturbance and mental health disorders that the workshop did not cover? What are they, and how do you propose handling the problem? If you are not sure of how to handle the problem, how could you find out more?

3. Describe two of the characteristics of a student who is identified as severely emotionally disturbed. Provide some examples of how you have seen those characteristics exhibited in a student at your school and how you supported this student.
