Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD)

Jamie Brown - Elementary Education Major
Brittany Medlin - Elementary/Early Childhood Major
Table of Contents

EBD Defined................................................ 3
EBD Characteristics..................................... 4
Strategies for the Classroom....................... 5 - 7
Helpful Websites........................................ 8 - 9
Conclusion............................................... 10-11
Emotional Behavioral Disorder Defined

The definition of EBD is hard to define and can be very subjective. IDEA '04 defines it as an emotional disturbance. IDEA '04, in the past, used the term serious emotional disturbance but that was dropped in 1999. Emotional Behavioral disorder is broken into three categories: externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, and low incidence behaviors. Externalizing behaviors can be acting out, aggression, coercive behavior, etc. Internalizing behaviors are harder to diagnose because they are more inward and withdrawn behaviors, which can include but are not limited to: depression, loneliness, anxiety, or anorexia. Low incidence behavior is the third category, and they are infrequent behaviors but are serious when they occur. An example of low incidence behaviors would be Schizophrenia.
Emotional Behavioral Disorder Characteristics

Since EBD is hard to define and can be broken into three categories the characteristics that you may see with EBD students can be broken down into different categories as well. EBD has a wide spectrum of potential characteristics that differ greatly from a student that exhibits either external or internal behaviors. Low-incidence disorders can exhibit a combination of the following characteristics.

- **Characteristics of Externalizing Behaviors**
  - Violates social norms
  - Hostile attitude
  - Physically aggressive
  - Can cause harm to others
  - Uses obscene and inappropriate gestures
  - Hyperactive
  - Often ignores authority and rules
  - Argues
  - Throws fits or tantrums
  - Uses a loud voice (Yells, screams, etc.)
  - Inappropriate behavior or feelings under normal circumstances

- **Characteristics of Internalizing Behaviors**
  - Painful shyness
  - Social outcast
  - Teased or picked on by peers
  - Depressed
  - Feelings of guilt or rejection
  - Socially withdrawn
  - Low self-esteem
  - Can potentially engage in self-destructive behavior
  - Wrestles with the idea of suicide
  - Battles anorexia
Classroom Strategies for Teachers

1. **Focus of Fairness:** Children with EBD do not like to be treated unfairly, as with any student. If you have a child with an emotional behavioral disorder never bend the rule or enforce consequences every time. If the child feels he or she is not being treated fairly their behavior will only get worse. Never allow for exceptions, stay consistent and fair to all students.

2. **Limit the Number of Rules:** Keep your list of rules short and sweet. Do not make them lengthy, or the student will struggle to follow the rules and may feel overwhelmed.

3. **Promote Positive behaviors:** It is more effective to promote and praise positive behaviors than to punish negative behaviors. A child with EBD may see a punishment as a form of attack and learn little from the punishment. If you reward positive behaviors, the EBD student will see that there is a positive result for their positive behavior and may act out less.

4. **Allow for Mini-Breaks:** If you prepare for mini-breaks throughout your lesson, students with EBD can focus more on the lesson and the task at hand. Children with EBD lack the maturity to remain on the task for long periods of time, making mini-breaks essential.

5. **Use Motivational Strategies:** Many Children with EBD have negative school experiences, which can lead to lack of motivation to be successful in school.
Working to motivate these students can avoid off-task and disruptive behaviors. To give these students the motivation they require, praise them regularly and celebrate hard work.

6. **Using Taped Word Read-Alongs:** Allow the students to listen to tapes. This improves reading skills, reading rate, and reading accuracy.

7. **Test Retakes:** Allow the students to retake a math or spelling test. Student with EBD tend to score higher, if they are allowed to retake the test.

8. **Form positive relationships:** Connect students with positive role models, promote social interactions that will benefit the student and create feelings of self-worth and serve as forms of external motivation for success.

9. **Prioritize Tasks:** Prioritize tasks so that students have a clear idea of what is most important in the present so that they may focus their attention on that task.

10. **Embrace Change:** Embrace change with an open mind and an accepting and enthusiastic attitude. Model this attitude for your students.

11. **Learn to assess the student’s energy or stress level:** This will help you become more prepared to deal with outbursts and disruptive behavior and maybe even work to prevent it.

12. **Delegate Classroom Responsibilities:** Students that are included in the classroom community are more likely to succeed socially and academically but the student does not need to become overwhelmed by the added responsibility.

13. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Set expectations that are attainable for the student so that they have something to actively work towards.
14. **Leave your personal life at home:** Come into the classroom focused on your students and you will be shocked at how they respond to you.

15. **Encourage Your Students:** This one seems simple enough but encouragement can go a long way. Encourage your students to become involved in school and the community.
Helpful Websites

1. [http://www.4ebd.org/](http://www.4ebd.org/): This website provides creative strategies for helping people with emotional and behavioral disorders. It makes it easier to find information, and find strategies and resources. It is easy to use and very welcoming. You can find resources, references, and you can contact the organization, Creative Answers for EBD.

2. [http://www.education.com/](http://www.education.com/): This is the website that I used to find the definition for EBD. This website contains information on any topic. It is also great because you can locate activities, worksheets, workbooks, and apps. Everything is broken up into ages, which helps if you want information on a specific age. You can ask questions, get parenting tips, get ideas for family fun, and look up health and nutrition.

3. [http://www.sess.ie/categories/autismautistic-spectrum-disorders/aspergers/ebd-behaviour-management-links](http://www.sess.ie/categories/autismautistic-spectrum-disorders/aspergers/ebd-behaviour-management-links): This website is a special education support website. You can find any disorder on this website. There are resources, documents, and links for the different disorders. This is a great website for a teacher who may have a child in her class with a disorder that she is not familiar with. This website would give someone all the help they needed concerning a disorder, including EBD.

4. [http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over3.html](http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over3.html) - This website provides you with just one page of strategies for dealing with EBD students but what it provides you is substantial when dealing with EBD students in a high school setting. Students in high school that struggle with EBD’s are
particularly difficult to deal with. The website stresses the idea that these students are struggling to identify themselves and prepare to leave school and transition into the real world. It is the educators job to help students realize the power they have to control their own destiny and equip them with tools to make the transition from high school to real world as easy as possible.

5. http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c81.pdf - This site has a great representation of the types of disorders that fall under EBD. The EBD umbrella covers a wide range of disorders with varying severity levels, impacts on academic performance, and characteristics. This site covers everything from Anxiety Disorders and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder to Schizophrenia, Anorexia, and Seriously Emotionally Disturbed. This site serves once again as a reminder that EBD is very difficult to define.
Conclusion

Emotional Behavioral Disorders are very difficult to define in nature and for that reason they are very hard to understand and manage. Not all students with an EBD will require special education services depending on the severity of their individual disorder. For a student with an EBD to qualify for special education services the disorder must adversely impact their academic performance. EBD’s can be broken into three different groups: externalizing behaviors, Internalizing behaviors, and low-incidence behaviors. Externalizing behaviors are a form of “acting-out” where internalizing behaviors are reflective of someone that is typically socially removed from their surroundings. Low-incidence behaviors such as Schizophrenia occur less frequently. EBD’s are hard to define because there is not a clear way to measure characteristics such as social maladjustment. It is also very difficult to distinguish between conduct related issues and externalizing behaviors that are caused by a deep rooted problem. Students with an EBD require structure, motivation, positive role models, and teams of support if they wish to experience academic and social gains. Some students with EBD’s benefit from special education services and are placed in special education settings where other students experience success with accommodations in the general education setting.

Understanding what EBD means is the first step to being able to prepare your classroom for students who struggle with this. It is the job of the educator to help their students build knowledge, values, and an understanding of community regardless of whether or not they have a disability. As future educators we can implement the strategies discussed in this LibGuide to help our students become active builders of
knowledge and become members of a thriving classroom community. It is important to make sure that every single student feels valuable and feels that he or she is capable of academic and social success regardless of a disability. As future educators we will work with our EBD students to prepare them for their bright futures and equip them with motivational and organizational tools that will make their journey a little easier. It is our job to exasperate all options before removing an EBD student from the general education setting because it is our goal to provide every student with as much exposure to the curriculum as possible. It is our job to view our students with EBD’s as students and not their disabilities.
Sources:


