

## Managing Defiance, Transitions, and Meltdowns In Children with ADHD

A Practical Approach For  
Parent, Caregivers,  
and Teachers

## Fred George PhD

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Family Advocacy Program at Fort  
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We are parents of one with ADD. (Now a  
Social Worker) and one with ADHD (Now  
an Army MP)

## Fred George PhD

Evaluated and treated people with  
ADD/ADHD since 1972 when it was  
called "hyperkinetic disorder of  
childhood." and adults didn't have it.

Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice  
in Enterprise Alabama since 1975.

## Key Concepts to Understanding ADHD/ADD And ODD

### Two Facts and One Opinion

## FACT 1

- People with ADHD/ADD have  
interest based nervous systems

– Studying something not interested in is  
like getting 2 south poles of magnets to  
touch

## FACT 2

- People with ADHD because of their  
smaller and less active inhibition  
(braking) systems are 30% delayed in  
self control (Russell Barkely)
- Those wt ADD are **likely** similarly  
delayed in the ability to sustain  
attention and resist distraction.

## New/ Different Ways of Thinking of ADD and ADHD

### ADHD

- ADHD- problems with inhibition (stopping and thinking; like the brain's brakes)
  - The area of the brain involved is smaller and less active
- The Hunter in the farmer's world
  - ADHD students are the Genetic Desendents of hunters
  - Scanning, quick decisions, hyperfocus

### ADD

- ADD – problem with focus
- ADD is like having unpredictable steering wheel collapses.
- ADD is like having a push button radio that is stuck on one channel. If it is not the channel everyone else is on, no matter how much energy is put forth, the student is lost.

### Noncompliance

- Failure to perform commanded behavior
- Failure to complete tasks.
- Failure to follow established rules

### Defiance

- A daring and bold resistance to authority or any opposing force.  
Dictionary.com
- Intentionally contemptuous behavior or attitude  
the free dictionary.com

### Defiance

- Willful disobedience  
James Dobson
- Contrasted to childish immaturity (Consequences tailored to the development self control level)

## DSM V

### Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Angry irritable mood
  - Often loses temper
  - Often touchy or easily annoyed
  - Is often angry or resentful

## DSM V

### Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Barkley- These represent emotional immaturity or deficient emotional self regulation.

Should be part of ADHD diagnostic criteria and correlates more with impulsivity and hyperactivity and is more predictive of impairment than inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

## DSM V

### Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Defiant Behavior- Social aspect
  - Argumentative
  - Defiant doesn't go by rules
  - Deliberately annoys others
  - Blames others

## DSM V

### Oppositional Defiant Disorder

- Vindictiveness
  - Is often spiteful and vindictive

Check for conduct disorder limited prosocial Emotions of lack of guilt, lack of empathy, lack of concern about performance, and/or shallow or deficient affect.

## Recognizing and Managing Different Types of "Defiance"

### Lack of focus or distractibility

- Lack of focus or distractibility
  - Give tasks at developmental level
  - Coach if necessary
  - Make a game

Treating as willful disobedience can result in poor self esteem, depression, or defiance.

## ADHD Protest Emotional Impulsivity

- ADHD Protest (Emotional Impulsivity)
  - Take a deep breath and back off
  - Quick Let's Make a Deal™ or no tv, phone, etc
  - 1-2-3

## Hyperfocus

- ADHD Hyperfocus- pit bull wt bone. TV show
    - Prepare for transitions. If don't prepare delay for a few minutes.
    - Use timers
      - Time limit- ie TV show
      - No time limit- video game, play
- 1-2-3

## Hyperfocus

- ADHD Hyperfocus General Patton Trait
- Something that has to be done now.
  - Buy new video game or collecting cards
  - Go out and play

## Managing Hyperfocus

- Manage the transition
- Anticipation/Engineer the Situation
- Don't give in.
- Try Counting
- Try taking away privileges
  
- Don't argue,(minimal talk) or blow up
- Ignore/ isolate yourself

## Deliberate Defiance

- Deliberate disobedience
    - Look you in the eye. No, I'm not going to do it
- 1-2-3 or similar approach (i.e. Barkely, ,Becker, or Forehand

## Explosions

- Reflect an extreme developmental delay in cognitive flexibility and frustration tolerance
- Explosions are similar to temper tantrums
- Generally occur during transitions

## Transitions

- Two types of hyperfocus
  - Pit bull with the bone- doing something and you want him to change
  - General Patton trait- wants to do something and you won't let him

## Other Situations

- Changes in routines
- Having to make a decision
- Starting homework or chores
- Getting ready for bed or going to bed
- Losing a game or handling disappointment

## Handling Explosions

- Equivalent of temper tantrums
  - Keep them safe
  - Ignore them when possible until calms down

## Preventing Explosions

- Gradual Transitions
  - Timers
    - Situations that have an endpoint-end of TV Show
    - Situations with no endpoint- video games & play

## Preventing Explosions

- Changes in routine
  - Warn ahead of time with frequent reinforcement
  - Reinforce with written revisions of daily schedules
  - Put events on calendar & use reminders

## Preventing Explosions

- Problem Solving- Ross Greene
  - Plan A Parent Adult Power Play
  - **Plan B Win-Win**
    - Empathy
    - Define the problem
    - Invitation
  - *Plan C child wins*

## Additional Suggestions

- Quality time- play
- Catch kids being good
- Incentives- Let's make a deal
- Act don't yak
- Practice Forgiveness of your child and yourself

## Treatment

- ADHD meds reduce ODD behavior in ADHD children
- Clonidine and Tenex often helpful for explosive behavior
- Severely explosive behavior sometimes a result of Mood Dysregulation Disorder or childhood bipolar disorder. Refer to psychiatrist.

## Walk out the door points

- Try not to take their impulsivity, honesty, emotional intensity, and "General Patton" and "pit bull with a bone behavior" personally.
- Because of hyperfocus, intensity, and emotional impulsivity dealing with transitions and defiance is the most challenging and crucial aspect of raising an ADHD Child.

## Taking care of yourself

Rechargeable flashlight

READ-C

3 C's

- Challenge
- Control over how you cope
- Commitment to yourself, family, church, job.

*When all else fails, outlast them.*