

# Defiant

## Concern

Antagonizing, defiant behavior, characterized by opposing authority, blaming others for mistakes, refusing to participate.

## Description

A certain amount of defiance is a normal part of adolescence, but a pattern of defying adults, especially when tied to blaming others for mistakes and trying to turn people against each other, is a serious problem that must be addressed.

Some defiant students simply haven't been exposed to positive discipline. They learn by experimenting, and may consider every instruction from an adult a test of who is in control. Others may be carrying deep anger about another underlying issue like abuse. They may feel powerless in the abusive situation and transfer their anger and need to assert control to a safer environment, school. Still others have a related disorder, like ADHD or depression, that needs to be addressed for the behavior to change.

A good plan for these students is often to help them gain more control in their lives. Use personal exploration time to encourage these students to find what they think is the underlying reason to their defiant behavior. Help them recognize that they can't always control outside forces, but they can always control their response. Combine concentrated skill training in impulse control with training in anger management techniques. It can also be useful to help these students identify a passion - like sports, making music, art - or service learning opportunities into which they can channel some of their potentially destructive energy. Ripple Effects for Staff has more concrete advice for engaging these students.

A small number of defiant students may actually have a conduct disorder that would require their placement in a special learning situation. The software may not be effective with these students.

## Goals of intervention - students will:

- Understand their preferred learning style
- Identify, celebrate and enhance their strengths
- Set a goal that begins to fulfill their promise
- Master specific skills for controlling the particular behavior that is getting them in trouble, such as talking back or fighting
- Begin to take responsibility for their action
- Make apologies if necessary
- Understand the possible role of family struggles in their behavior
- Understand the possible role of depression or ADHD in their behavior

## A suggested scope and sequence - Teens

### Strengthening self

Strengths  
Weaknesses  
Passions  
Learning style  
Sports and exercise type  
Goals  
Brain  
Self-efficacy  
Curiosity

### Impulse control

Fighting  
Lying  
Rebellion  
Conflict - with teacher  
Talking back  
Controlling impulses  
Cause and effect  
Empathy  
Empathy  
Understanding feelings  
Perspective taking

### Managing feelings

Managing feelings  
Anger  
Frustration  
Sadness  
Depression  
Self-talk  
Calming down  
Mindfulness

### Community skills

Respectful to authority  
Making apologies  
Values - social  
Restitution

### Learning challenges

Learning disability  
ADHD  
Dyslexia

### Personal issues

Depression  
Alcoholic parent  
Addicted parent  
Drugs  
Child abuse  
Jealousy  
Neglected

## A suggested scope and sequence - Kids

### Strengthening self

Strengths  
Learning style  
Goals  
Brain

### Empathy

Empathy  
Understanding feelings  
Point of view

### Community skills

Respect  
Apologies

### Learning challenges

Learning problems  
ADHD  
Dyslexia

### Personal issues

Parents' Substance Use  
Drugs  
Domestic violence  
Jealous  
Beaten

### Impulse control

Authority - defying  
Fighting  
Lying  
Talking back  
Teacher problems  
Impulse control  
Consequences  
Problem - naming

### Managing feelings

Managing feelings  
Calming down  
Self-awareness  
Defiance  
Sad  
Frustrated  
Angry