

Ep #136: Using behavior skills with ADHD and ODD

This is Episode 136.

We welcome you to The ADHD Smarter Parenting Podcast. Here to heal and elevate lives is your Parenting Coach Siope Kinikini.

Hello, everyone. How are you? Welcome to The Smarter Parenting ADHD Podcast. I am Siope, your host here at the podcast. Thank you for joining me wherever you may be, driving around town, exercising, walking your dog. I've heard it all, and it's great to connect with you through coaching. So thank you to those who have reached out for coaching.

We're going to be talking about this very important issue that has come up in coaching with multiple parents. This is an issue of recognizing ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD).

Now, they are closely related to each other because a lot of times, they are diagnosed together, which is interesting. So we're going to talk about ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder and why it's important for you to determine and find out what your child is struggling with in order to work through the issues.

This came about because of a discussion that I had with a father. His name is Brad, who called me up for coaching for ADHD for his son. However, what we realized over time is we were working through the ADHD issues, but the son was exhibiting more extreme behaviors, which was the Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

Now, his son doesn't have an official diagnosis. However, we're starting to notice some patterns and behaviors that are happening with this child and why it is important to address that because there are some things that we can do with a child who has ADHD to correct the behaviors. However, it was Oppositional Defiant Disorder. There are some other things that we need to take into consideration.

So, while they are both going to be using skills that we have on the smarter parenting website, specifically, we will do consequences, we will do rewards. We will use those skills. By the way, those skills are found on the Smarter Parenting website. We're going to be implementing those things and we will be using Effective Praise as well. So using all these skills, there are some things to take in consideration when we are working with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in lieu of the ADHD behaviors. So we're going to be talking about that.

Now during this podcast, there are three things I want us to be able to really cover well, and by the end of the podcast, what I want you to be able to do is to determine are we working with the child with ADHD symptoms, the inattentiveness, or the hyperactivity, or the combined behaviors that are leading to the misbehavior, or are we dealing with a child who has Oppositional Defiant Disorder? So I'm going to define what that is.

The first thing is to make a definition of what is Oppositional Defiant Disorder. The second thing I want us to focus on is that parents should know when we're dealing with ADHD or when we're dealing with oppositional defiant behavior. Then the third thing is that we are still going to implement the skills as they are outlined for each of them. So the skills do not change when we're working with these kids; however, our approach in implementing the skills may change. So the steps remain the same, the skills are exactly the same, nothing changes as far as the skills, but the way that we present them and the way that we work through these issues may have some slight differences.

All right, so let's start off first with an explanation of what is Oppositional Defiant Disorder. It's also called ODD, and even the best-behaved children can be difficult at times. But if your child or your teenager has persistent patterns of anger, irritability, arguing defiance, or vindictiveness towards you or other authority figures, he or she may have Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

So I want you to think about that. We're looking at patterns of anger, irritability, arguing, defiance, or the vindictiveness towards you or other authority figures. This could be teachers. This could be a pastor, could be a scout leader. Anyone in authority. A grandparent. If they have these types of frequent persistent patterns of anger and irritability, they're consistently arguing and they're defiant or even vindictive towards authority figures, then we may be looking at oppositional defiant.

Now we're not going to diagnose it, but this is the pattern of behavior you're going to look for. Okay. Now sometimes, it's difficult to recognize the differences between a strong-willed or emotional child and one with Oppositional Defiant Disorder. It's normal for a child to challenge authority figures as they're growing because that's just part of the stages of a child's development.

Signs of ODD generally begin during preschool years. Sometimes ODD may develop a little later, but almost always before the early teen years, and these behaviors cause significant impairment with family, social activities, school, and work. Now, it is an official diagnosis in the DSM-V, which is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, and that is what's used to classify ADHD and any other diagnoses that may be out there.

So, I'm going to list out some of the criteria, the emotional and behavioral symptoms that last at least six months: angry and irritable mood; often and easily loses their temper; is frequently touchy and easily annoyed by others; is often angry; they are argumentative and have defiant behaviors; they often argue with adults or people in authority; they often actively defy or refuse to comply with adults requests or rules. Often, they deliberately annoy or upset people. They often

blame others for his or her mistakes or misbehaviors, And that's a big one. They'll blame other people for things and not take any responsibility. Under vindictiveness, they are often spiteful or vindictive, or they have shown spiteful or vindictive behavior at least twice in the past six months.

So ODD can vary in severity. There could be mild symptoms of ODD, there could be moderate, and there could be severe. Now, again, we are looking for consistency over time, and we're looking at intensity, and it can vary. They can be delightful kids as well, but you're looking for defiant behaviors towards authority figures. You're looking for vindictive or spiteful behavior, actively defying or refusing to comply with adults, and blaming other people. So consistently behaving in this way.

If you notice this with your child, you may be dealing with oppositional defiant behavior. Whereas when we're dealing with ADHD, we're often dealing with the hyperactivity, the impulsiveness, or the combination of the two. So all of these can lead to misbehaviors or making poor choices or acting out.

Now, the question is, when do you see a doctor about this? As I've recommended before for ADHD, this goes for every diagnosis or any time you're going to see a doctor with your child. It's important for parents to keep track. Keep a journal, and this is a behavior journal. You want to keep track of what their behaviors are like. You want to rate it from 0 to 10, and then explain what is happening. What are the behaviors you are observing or your child is exhibiting? You also want to keep track of if they're sleeping well, if they're eating well. If there's other things happening in the environment. So peer pressure or teacher who is mean perhaps or something like that.

So, just be aware that keeping a journal and then taking it into a doctor will be extremely helpful for the doctor to come to a diagnosis much quicker. If you don't do this, the doctor will probably ask you questions, and before making a decision on a diagnosis, they may have you do this exercise.

So keep track and try and keep a track of it over a long period of time in between doctor's visits. So when you go in there, you are prepared, "This is what we're dealing with. This is what's happening. This is the intensity. We've already factored in sleep, eating behaviors, and other environmental factors, so tell me what we need to do."

So you can take your child in to see a doctor about ODD behaviors. So it's important for you to evaluate these things. For ODD, you want to be very particular about how your child reacts to instruction, and if they complain about things being unreasonable, they demand, or they blame others for their problems, this may indicate that they are struggling with ODD. So this is what ODD looks like.

Now, when I was working with this family about trying to understand ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder, it was important for us to separate the differences between working with a

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child with ADHD symptoms. And then working with a child who is just oppositional defiant. Are they oppositionally defiant towards things?

Now parents should know, this is the second point of the podcast is parents should know when we're dealing with ADHD and oppositional defiant behavior. When I initially met with this family to talk about what was happening, we were focused in on the ADHD portion of the behavior. Now, the difficulty in that is that we're dealing with impulsivity and hyperactivity. So obviously, we are going to structure the interactions that the parents have in implementing the skills that we use in a way that addresses the hyperactivity or the inattentiveness.

What was not shared with me at the time that we started to implement this was the consistent defiant behavior that was happening and the way that the defiant behavior was being manifest. So once we were dealing with this and they had learned the skills, the skills were being implemented, but they were seeing little progress, I started to explore a little bit more to find out what is going on here.

What I was able to discover is that we were not dealing primarily with ADHD; we were dealing with oppositional defiant behavior. So if you're calling me in for coaching and we're talking about ADHD, I am going to be talking about ADHD and the symptoms that come with ADHD. If there is a defiant issue that's happening, you need to also share that with me. You need to let me know there is a defiant behavior that consistently happens with this child, and this is what it looks like. This is the intensity. This is how long that's been going on, and let me know so we can tailor it to fit what is happening in your environment with your child and all of your temperaments as well as addressing the issues of oppositional defiant.

So parents, take the time to evaluate, are we dealing with impulsiveness? Are we dealing with hyperactivity or are we dealing with just defiance, absolute defiance to authority figures? You're going to see this over the course of multiple adults. So they're not only going to be defiant towards you as a parent, they will be defiant towards other authority figures as well. So that's one way that you can determine that. Take some time and evaluate that. Once you know what you're dealing with, what you're focused on, then we start implementing the skills.

Now, I'm going to talk more about skills, but I'm going to talk to you about that third point, which is there's a different approach to the skills, although the skills remain the same. We're going to talk about that in just a bit after this message.

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Okay, so let's talk about the different approaches that you are going to use with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, even though you're using the skills consistently. So the skills are staying the same. The steps to the skills, the intervention techniques, the purpose of the skills, all of that stays the same. What changes is your interaction with your child in implementing the skills?

It's important for you as a parent to be aware that your interaction with a child who is struggling with the behavioral issues of ODD is going to make a huge impact on if they can make corrections in their behavior.

Now, the recommendations for treatment for ODD include parent-training, parent-child interaction therapy, individual or family therapy, cognitive problem solving training, and social skills training. If you notice, with Smarter Parenting, we are based in a cognitive problem-solving training model. So, it's about being cognitive about what is happening and change thought patterns more effectively. So solving problems, Decision Making all of that is part of cognitive problem-solving.

The parent training piece is having somebody work with you on parenting skills that will address the following items helping the parent become more consistent, helping the parent be positive and less frustrated at your child. In some cases, your child may participate in this training with you. So everyone in your family developed shared goals for how to handle problems.

I always recommend that when you're teaching a skill to a child for a specific behavior, that you incorporate the entire family into the process. Because this is a family dynamic, and having everybody on board with the skill helps everyone know what's happening, but it also helps you not single out a child for help. Because we don't want it to be, "This is a problem child. We are doing this for only this child. Everybody else is good." We don't want to single out children that way. So I always recommend that if you're going to teach a skill, teach it to all the kids and implement it for all of them. Be consistent with all of them.

The parent training that you received through Smarter Parenting will use the skills of [Effective Negative Consequences](#) and [Effective Positive Rewards](#), and we teach you to be more consistent by choosing consequences and rewards that you can follow through with. So you're not making claims like, "You're grounded for a year," where you know you're not going to follow through with grounding them for a year. It's making things custom fit so you can follow through and that your child feels like, "Hey, I'm being rewarded for positive behaviors," or, "I received a consequence for negative behaviors and I don't want that to happen again." So, it's being more consistent.

The other part is learning to be more positive. With a parent that I'm working with, who has a child with ODD, I am constantly working with them on how to remain as positive as possible throughout the process of learning the skills and implementing them. The reason being is keeping yourself in a positive state of mind does have an influence on your child and your child's ability to recognize how to react to situations.

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If you are frustrated and you are upset and you are behaving in a way that is negative, it actually feeds into the negativity your child has and justifies their behavior to continue to misbehave.

"Well, I'm not being treated kindly. So, of course, I'm going to misbehave." So remaining positive and consistent are going to be essential.

Now, in order to do this, I would use the skill of [Effective Praise](#). Now, [I've covered this in a lot of podcasts before, but there is a huge difference between Effective Praise and just praise.](#)

Effective Praise is praising in a way that your child knows specifically what they're doing well in order to help them encourage the idea of repeating the positive behavior. You're being very descriptive. You're giving reasons why that behavior is important, that are meaningful for your child, and then you're encouraging them to continue on with that behavior.

So Effective Praise helps keep things positive. What I've learned from other parents is that when they start using Effective Praise, they actually feel more positive and they feel like their stress is being reduced by using this skill.

This is used even when a child is doing something wrong, you can find small things that they are doing well that you can praise. Let me give you an example. So there is a child who was screaming and yelling and causing a lot of noise and really driving everybody crazy. So the mother was communicating with the child to sit down on the chair, giving very specific instructions, "You need to sit down on the chair." Now the child was jumping up and down and screaming, and then looked at the child and said, "You need to sit down," calmly, and the child stopped and looked at her just briefly. Just looked at her. Well, mom, praised that. Mom's like, "Thank you for stopping and looking at me. Now you need to sit down in the chair."

So even in that small interaction where something huge and negative is happening, any time your child makes any type of positive behavior happen, you want to start praising that. You praise it in order to ground them in that they're doing something well, but also in helping you deescalate your own moods and your own frustrations by recognizing the good. [It also teaches your child that, regardless of what you do, I will still find goodness in what you're doing and I will work with you to improve your behavior.](#)

Keeping things positive is essential, and then it's working on not being frustrated with your child. We all have expectations for our children. We want them to behave certain ways. We all have those expectations. And when those expectations are not met, we become frustrated. We become upset. We don't understand why they can't just follow through.

Well, we need to understand, children are still learning and still struggling and trying to figure things out and our role is to model or demonstrate to them how to remain calm even when things around them are frustrating and difficult. So that definitely is something that is very important.

So the skills remain the same, but our approach to how we're going to implement them is going to alter just slightly, depending on what we're trying to teach our child. So this is essentially one

of the most key pieces in your parenting is determining what are we dealing with first. Are we dealing with ADHD or are we dealing with oppositional defiant behavior?

We also need to know the difference between the two. We need to also understand that there's a different approach to the skills when we do this. If we need to be more consistent, more firm. You're going to find that with ADHD children, you can praise them when they're having difficulty, and they can recognize that and actually pull themselves together and be present more than a child with oppositional defiant behavior as they may tend to be more defiant or continue the defiant behaviors.

It's slightly different in the way that we implement some of the skills. However, the skills remain exactly the same. You're going to use Effective Negative Consequences to be more consistent and Effective Praise to be more consistent for both of those behaviors. Here's the thing, everybody learns the skills and then when you call in for coaching, then we can implement them based on what we're dealing with, but the skills remain the same. These are all parenting skills. They can be generalized for a lot of different behaviors.

In fact, it was interesting. I was having a conversation about the Teaching-Family Model, which is what we use. I was giving a presentation on Smarter Parenting for some physicians and what was amazing to this group of physicians, I shared with them that the Teaching-Family Model, the skills that you're learning as a parent, are the same skills that they have been using in homes where there are people with developmental disabilities and they've been doing that for a long time. There's also a home for older folks slowly with dementia, and they are using these skills in those homes.

These are skills that are lifelong and useful throughout the entire life of your child. This is going to be helpful for them and helpful for your grandchildren in the future. These are effective. They don't change. The skills remain the same the way that we use them. However, we are adjusting to the situations and to what it is we are dealing with at the time.

So now during this podcast, we've covered those areas of oppositional defiant. What is it? So now we understand what it is. We also talked about parents should know when we're dealing with ADHD or with oppositional defiant. Which one are we dealing with? If you're calling me for coaching, which one are we actually dealing with? Is the behavior because of the ADHD, or are we dealing with oppositional defiant behavior, or is there something else happening? So trying to determine what that is. And then understand that there's a different approach to the skills, even though the skills remain the same, depending on what we're dealing with. If it's with ADHD, we're going to do a lot more exercises to bring them back into focus, to make them more attentive. If it's with oppositional defiant behavior, then we're going to focus more on being consistent, being positive, and moving things forward in that way. However, the skills remain the same.

Now, are we dealing with both? Yeah, absolutely. We could be dealing with both. But one approach is going to be working more effectively than another. As I mentioned earlier in the

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podcast, in discussing ADHD and oppositional defiant behavior, if we're focused on the ADHD side effects, the information I'm receiving from a parent during a coaching session, then I will obviously focus it that way.

However, if I get more information and then we start to learn we're dealing with more of the oppositional defiant behavior, then we will shift it and we will focus in on what the parent needs to do to address that behavior. So it's super fascinating. It's very interesting, and it's important for parents to be able to know the differences between the two and what it is we're working on.

[So this podcast should be very helpful for a lot of parents who call in for coaching and also who are dealing with very difficult behaviors with their children.](#) Are they being defiant? Is this ADHD? Is that what we're dealing with? What are we dealing with? What are we dealing with? Once we know what we're dealing with, then we can apply the right medicine.

That's it for me for this week. I look forward to talking to you next week. There's so much I have planned for this podcast because there's so much information out here that I need share with you, but I look forward to sharing it with you as the time goes on. So I will be talking to you soon.

Have a wonderful day. Use the skills. Use the skills. Jump over to the Smarter Parenting website and check them out, and I'll talk to you soon. All right, thanks. Bye.

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