

Definition:

'Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties' covers a wide range of presenting features that will impact to a varying level of degree on children's educational opportunities, participation, social relationships and inclusion. Many behaviours which are seen as 'challenging' stem from an underlying emotional and/or social need. Sometimes behaviours can be directly linked to medical diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Tourettes Syndrome. At other times, behaviour and emotional responses can be linked to particular circumstances/events such as bereavement, family breakdown, attachment, family restructuring, loss or being taken into care. Any behaviour should be viewed in light of the multiple and dynamic contexts in which the child operates. Interventions and approaches adopted to support the individual will not only need to take into account the context in which the behaviour occurs but also to address the underlying social, emotional, learning or communication needs of the pupil.

Characteristics seen in the classroom:

- * Behaviour which may be seen as attention seeking
- * Difficulties in accepting adult direction
- * Lack of motivation
- * Difficulties concentrating in class
- * Shouting out/disruptive behaviour
- * Running away
- * Withdrawn behaviours
- * Tearfulness
- * Extremes of emotion (i.e. extreme anger, anxiety or distress)
- * Lack of self-regulation
- * Social isolation
- * Difficulties with social interaction
- * Little empathy shown
- * Does not pick up on social cues
- * Extreme reactions to frustration / stress

Where to go for help:

- Speak to class teacher / SENDCo in the first instance
- Educational Psychology Service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)



Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties

Assessment and Diagnosis:

Assessment of challenging behaviour can be completed by specialist support services and/or the Educational Psychology Service. Assessment should involve observation of the child in more than one context and should take into account the frequency and duration of the behaviour(s). Particular assessment tools may include: Functional Analysis, Spence Children's Anxiety Scale, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and particular behaviour checklists. The pupil's perspective and views are also crucial to gain. Assessment should also take into account the wider systems that children are in such as their peer groups/family and the wider community. Checking the pupil's functional, cognitive and communication skills can also provide useful information with regard to presenting behaviours. A diagnosis of a specific behavioural difficulty such as ADHD or ASD will need CAMHS involvement.

Frequently used Interventions:

- * Circle of Friends programme (for anxiety)
- * Work-Reward System
- * Social Skills Training
- * Anger Management training
- * Self-esteem interventions
- * Reward Charts
- * Early Support / TAC (working with family)
- * Mentoring
- * Social Stories
- * Solution focussed approaches
- * Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)
- * Roleplay
- * Problem-solving
- * TIS (Trauma Informed Schools) support and activities