

# Mental Health

## MISDIAGNOSES IN CHILDREN



### ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

- Inattention
- Impulsivity
- Hyperactivity

#### What the cause might be:

- Normal age-appropriate behavior
- Delay in learning self-discipline
- Lack of a good night's sleep
- Hunger due to missed breakfast
- Anxiety, worry about school, family
- Sensory processing disorder (SPD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Learning disorder such as dyslexia



**ADHD is the most prevalent current diagnosis among children aged 3 – 17 years.**

[cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/kf-childrens-mental-health-report.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/kf-childrens-mental-health-report.html)

### DEPRESSION

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

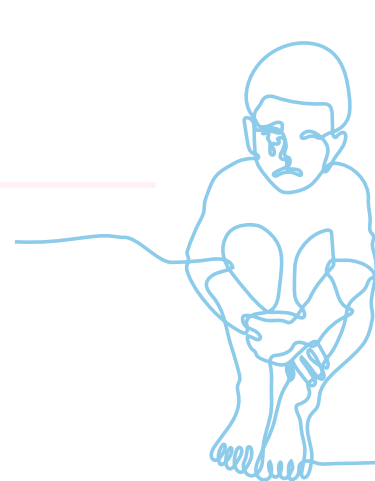
- Sadness
- Fatigue
- Decreased interest
- Weight fluctuations
- Difficulty concentrating

#### What the cause might be:

- Hypothyroidism
- Anxiety disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Depression among children and adolescents is common but frequently unrecognized. **It affects 2% of prepubertal children and 5% to 8% of adolescents.**

[aafp.org/afp/2000/1115/p2297.html#:~:text=Depression%20among%20children%20and%20adolescents,major%20depressive%20or%20bipolar%20disorder](https://www.aafp.org/afp/2000/1115/p2297.html#:~:text=Depression%20among%20children%20and%20adolescents,major%20depressive%20or%20bipolar%20disorder)



### AUTISM

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

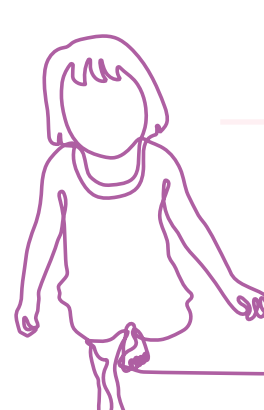
- Social communication problems
- Restrictive and repetitive behaviors
- Restricted speech

#### What the cause might be:

- Speech impediment
- Anxiety disorder such as selective mutism
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Age-related desire for routine

*While it's true that autism rates have increased, the condition is a lot rarer than people think. **One in 68 children has autism, or only a little bit above one percent.***

[rileychildrens.org/connections/common-mental-health-misdiagnoses-in-children](https://www.rileychildrens.org/connections/common-mental-health-misdiagnoses-in-children)



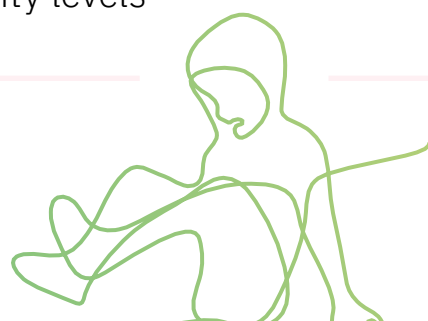
### BIPOLAR DISORDER

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

- Changes in energy, mood, activity levels

#### What the cause might be:

- Borderline personality disorder



*Community studies estimate **lifetime prevalence of bipolar spectrum disorders at between 0% to 3% among adolescents.***

[nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/file\\_148132.pdf](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/file_148132.pdf)

### POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

- Repetitive distressing thoughts
- Flashbacks

#### What the cause might be:

- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

**15% to 43% of girls and 14% to 43% of boys go through at least one trauma.** *Of those children and teens who have had a trauma, 3% to 15% of girls and 1% to 6% of boys develop PTSD.*

[ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common\\_children\\_teens.asp#:~:text=Share%20this%20page-,How%20Common%20is%20PTSD%20in%20Children%20and%20Teens%3F,certain%20types%20of%20trauma%20survivors.](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_children_teens.asp#:~:text=Share%20this%20page-,How%20Common%20is%20PTSD%20in%20Children%20and%20Teens%3F,certain%20types%20of%20trauma%20survivors.)



### OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (ODD)

#### Why the diagnosis is made:

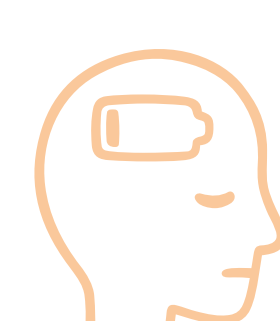
- Disruptive behavior
- Temper tantrums, outbursts
- Hostile, negative, defiant behavior

#### What the cause might be:

- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Undiagnosed learning disorder

**1% to 16% of all school-age children and adolescents have ODD.**

[aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-With-Oppositional-Defiant-Disorder-072.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-With-Oppositional-Defiant-Disorder-072.aspx)



### EFFECTS OF AN INACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

- Child grows up thinking he has a mental health disorder when he doesn't
- Confusion and stress occur because the treatment isn't working
- Taking the wrong medication is potentially dangerous
- Time is wasted before the actual condition can be diagnosed
- Condition worsens as patient waits for wrong treatment to work

*Misdiagnosis and inaccurate treatment can increase dysfunction by exposing you to pharmacological therapies that augment existing symptomatology or cause the emergence of new symptoms.*

[bridgestorecovery.com/blog/the-dangers-of-mental-health-misdiagnosis-why-accuracy-matters](https://www.bridgestorecovery.com/blog/the-dangers-of-mental-health-misdiagnosis-why-accuracy-matters)

[myspectrumcc.com](https://myspectrumcc.com)

Sources:

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[hsia.org/impact-of-mental-health-misdiagnosis](https://www.hsia.org/impact-of-mental-health-misdiagnosis)

[rileychildrens.org/connections/common-mental-health-misdiagnoses-in-children](https://www.rileychildrens.org/connections/common-mental-health-misdiagnoses-in-children)

