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## Avoid Disliking the ODD Student

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Sure you say...but this really is important! One strong drive of the ODD student is to fight with you, to oppose. If you readily join in the battle, the focus will usually be on the fight. Rather than finding yourself opposing the student, work at being calm and neutral when they are oppositional.

You may be asking yourself, "How do I like someone who is so unlikable?" With difficult students our experiences cause us to prepare for the next conflict. Based on what has been occurring, we have good reason to expect bad things. So, when we encounter this student, we are mentally prepared for conflict, and we behave in ways that anticipate the conflict. Likewise, the student is probably also anticipating and preparing for more of the same. Some find that, in order to break from this "defiant dance," it helps to consciously create non-conflict experiences with the student. For example, ask the student to join you in some neutral activity, such as walking to the snack area. Engage in new conversation, ask about an interest of the student. If you begin to build non-conflict times, you may find that there are likable characteristics in the student.

## Practice Emotional Neutrality

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The ODD student watches how you respond to his or her behavior. If you show emotional investment, the ODD student will be reinforced for his or her behavior. The person in charge must be professional while maintaining emotional neutrality. Remember, one of the student's driving motivations is, "My greatest sense of control comes from how I make others feel."

For many, the greater challenge may be refraining from overly enthusiastic responses when the student does something correctly. If the ODD student thinks you may have strong emotional responses of any kind, he/she may be inclined to use your emotion against you by behaving in a way so as to influence you to become emotional.



## Continuous Performance Monitoring

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Intermittent reinforcement is the most effective schedule of reinforcement to shape positive behaviors. Staying on task while completing an assignment is a skill that requires much self-discipline and practice. To help students with this skill, a continuous-play signaling tape and pad are used for self-recording. The student self-monitors whether he or she was on task at the sound of each beep on the tape.

For students who resist this method, a similar technique can be used. Say to the student, "Every time the tape beeps, mark down if I (the teacher) am doing something helpful or unhelpful for you." To make this judgment, the ODD student must be paying attention.

This continuous-play signal tape can be easily made or "Listen, Look, and Think" (by Dr. Harvey Parker) can be ordered through ADD Warehouse at (800) 233-9273.

## Determining What's Behind the Behavior

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A good mental checklist to use includes the four general goals behind misbehavior according to Adlerian psychology. When a child or teen is misbehaving, ask yourself the following.

- Power:**
- Does this person want more power or control?
  - How can I, the adult in charge, allow the child or teen more opportunities to have a sense of control within needed parameters?
- Revenge:**
- Is this behavior about getting even?
  - What is the root of this anger?
  - How am I, the adult in charge, being helpful or unhelpful in my approach?
- Attention Getting:**
- Does the behavior seem to be about getting more of my attention?
  - What are some appropriate outlets for gaining more attention?
- Inadequate Feelings:**
- Is this person "shutting down" because he or she believes the work is too difficult?
  - How can his or her self-esteem be increased?
  - Do any academic accommodations need to be made?

# Anger Outlets

Put a check by the activities that would help you get a grip on anger.

- Talk to someone you trust.
- Count to ten or higher.
- Hit a pillow or punching bag.
- Talk yourself through the situation (*self-talk*).
- Take a personal time-out.
- Find a private place where you can go to calm down.
- Squeeze a stress ball.
- Read a good book.
- Listen to your favorite music.
- Exercise vigorously.
- Get alone and scream.
- Take a deep breath.
- Use a journal to write down thoughts and feelings.
- Take a one-minute vacation. Imagine going to a favorite spot or doing a favorite activity.
- Collect ice cream or craft sticks. Break sticks when you are mad or frustrated.
- Enjoy a pet.
- Draw or paint your feelings.
- Write a letter (*even if you don't send it*).
- Clean or organize your room.
- Play a sport.
- Play with clay, Play Doh®, or Model Magic®.
- Enjoy a hobby or special interest such as working on a collection or computer games.

Now make your own "anger outlets" plan. Narrow your list down to three or four strategies for handling anger.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*Finally, commit your list to memory and use it when you feel stressed.*

## Anger Outlets

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- Objectives:**
1. Students will learn three rules about anger.
  2. Students will devise a plan to constructively release anger.

- Materials:**
1. Anger Outlets handout
  2. Pencil or pen
  3. Punching bag or pillow
  4. Chill Out Bag—the Chill Out Bag may be ordered through YouthLight, Inc. at (800) 209-9774.

**Motivation:** Demonstrate positive ways to release anger with the “Chill Out Bag.”

- Lesson:**
1. Discuss and memorize the three rules of anger that follow:

- You can't hurt yourself.
- You can't hurt others.
- You can't hurt property.

Discuss examples of each rule.

2. Remind students that it is O.K. to get angry. Everyone gets angry, but we can't lose control. With this in mind, inform students that today they will be making a personal plan to handle anger appropriately.
3. Distribute the accompanying handout called “Anger Outlets” to all students. Circle the “anger outlet” ideas that fit them. Note the open lines. Students may write their own ideas on these spaces provided they follow the rules of anger just memorized.
4. Now ask students to make their own “personal anger outlet plan” on their handouts. Ask students to narrow their plans down to three or four ideas they can learn to do automatically.

**Application:** Ask students to use the “Volcano Calendar” (Strategy #129) to monitor how well they are handling their anger.