

**A Handbook for Adolescent Health Practitioners  
A Review of Behavioral and Emotional Disorders in Adolescents:  
Nature, Assessment, and Treatment  
David A. Wolfe & Eric J. Mash (Eds.)  
New York: Guilford Press ([www.guilford.com](http://www.guilford.com))  
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Adolescence is a critical developmental time period during which emotional and behavioral difficulties are frequently normalized by lay people as “just a passing phase,” or misunderstood as “bad behavior that should be punished.” Those of us who work with adolescents have long been aware of the challenges of distinguishing pathological behavior from normal adolescent turbulence. In addition, adolescent mental health professionals understand the importance of recognizing adolescent psychological difficulties as distinct and not merely an extension of childhood disorders. This notion is not always addressed in psychological research and literature. Fortunately, this excellent text edited by Wolfe and Mash brings the study of adolescent disorders to the forefront, by presenting the extant research on both assessment and treatment of behavioral and emotional difficulties in adolescence.

This unique and well-organized text includes contributions from leading authorities in the field of adolescent psychopathology. This volume addresses internalizing (including a section on suicidal and self-harm behavior), externalizing, and developmental disorders, in addition to many less commonly recognized disorders and behaviors (including personality and health related-disorders, gender identity and sexual disorders, relationship violence). Each chapter provides integrative information on a variety of relevant etiological and developmental factors (e.g., biological, familial, social), and suggests how these factors should influence assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of adolescent problems. In addition, relevant topics such as the identification of risk factors, prevention programs, and methods of incorporating families and schools in treatment are discussed when relevant data exist.

One of the introductory chapters provides an excellent framework for understanding adolescent adjustment and development. It includes the interaction of developmental changes (e.g., puberty), interpersonal contexts (e.g., family, peers, school), demographic and intrapersonal factors (e.g., ethnicity, community factors), and developmental outcomes (e.g., autonomy, intimacy). This chapter highlights the aspects of adolescent development that are crucial in understanding the etiology of, and treatment for, adolescent psychopathology. Another introductory chapter, which focuses on linking treatment and prevention, reviews the efficacy and effectiveness data of adolescent treatments. This chapter appropriately highlights the existing challenges of translating research into practice and emphasizes the need to effectively balance adherence to efficacious treatments with flexibility when working with adolescents.

One notable theme throughout this volume is that more research is desperately needed to better understand the breadth and depth of adolescent disorders and, ultimately, to more successfully treat adolescents in need. Much of the available research is based on studies including both children and adolescents, or children alone, and thus does not fully address the differences between these developmental stages. For example, the chapter on ADHD is extremely thorough and comprehensive, yet there was a limited discussion on implementing psychosocial treatments for ADHD with adolescents. The author acknowledges that very few studies have examined the efficacy of parent training, and appropriately cautions the reader

against generalizing all results from the child treatment outcome studies. Yet an important question still remains: What do we really know about treating ADHD among adolescents?

A major strength of many chapters is that the authors provide integrative and theoretically-based conceptualizations of the disorders with useful suggestions of future research offered. For example, the chapter addressing mood disorders reviews an integrative model of adolescent depression that is based on an earlier model of childhood depression, but incorporates attributes of adolescence that may increase depression risk during this developmental stage. This model provides a framework for understanding why adolescents-onset depression may have a tendency to re-occur throughout the lifespan. Further, this chapter highlights the fact that while several treatments achieve acute symptom relief among depressed adolescents, more research needs to be done to evaluate long-term symptom reduction and remission. In addition, the authors highlight the utility of patient-treatment match, and the need for further research to examine the mechanisms of change for adolescents. Similarly, the chapters on self-harm behaviors, mental retardation, and conduct problems provide interesting, thought-provoking discussions on the unique aspects of these problems among adolescents.

In sum, this outstanding volume covers a range of behavioral and emotional disorders among adolescents. The authors provide pertinent information on assessment, diagnosis, prevention, and intervention, and they follow an integrative framework to conceptualize each disorder. While a dearth of research still remains for many adolescent disorders, most of the authors in this text think creatively and outline ways the existing research can effectively inform the directions of future research. This well-written text covers a vast amount of empirically-based information and it should serve as a valuable resource for health professionals working with adolescents in medical centers, private practice, academic, and school settings. Furthermore, doctors specializing in pediatrics and family medicine could also benefit greatly from this text. Finally, this volume could be extremely useful for adolescent psychopathology courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

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