Mental health problems in children and adolescents are quite common and potentially lay the foundation for life-long adjustment struggles, with significant health, economic, relationship, and societal impacts. I will overview several of the more common psychiatric disorders in children and adolescents, briefly highlight substantive changes from DSM-IV to V, and summarize relevant therapeutic interventions. Finally, I will share clinical observations and insights from my two decades of professional practice with children, adolescents, and their families.

I. Common Child/Adolescent Psychiatric Disorders
   A. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
      1. Blowing through the intersections of life: The “classic” hyperactive kid
      2. Sluggish Cognitive Tempo: The core deficit in ADD?
   B. Disruptive Behavior Disorders
      1. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD0
      2. Conduct Disorder
   C. Anxiety Disorders
      1. Riding the brake through life: Rigidity in the anxious child
      2. Worry, fear, and somatization
   D. Depressive Disorders
      1. Getting engaged: initiation and motivation deficits in depressed kids
   E. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
      1. An entity in search of clarity

II. DSM-IV to DSM-V: A confusing transition
   A. ADHD loses important differentiation
   B. ASD undergoes a frustrating change
      1. Loss of diagnostic clarity
      2. Lack of appreciation regarding group differences

III. Interventions that work: What we can do to help
   A. Individual Therapy (behavioral & cognitive behavioral)
   B. Behavior Management Training
   C. Parent-Child Interaction Training (P-CIT)

IV. Insights from a child psychologist’s perspective: What I have learned…
   A. Comorbidity is the rule, not the exception
   B. Developmental “stress points”
C. Multigenerational Transmission of Symptoms
D. When does treatment work?

Selected References:


