



## Behavioural Disorders: Understanding Behaviour, Supporting Mental Wellbeing

### Mental Health Matters:

Behavioural disorders are more common than many people realise. They can affect how individuals think, feel, communicate, and interact with others in their daily lives. While these conditions often begin during childhood or adolescence, they can continue into adulthood if left untreated.

The good news is that early recognition, understanding, and appropriate support can significantly improve outcomes and quality of life.

This month, we explore some of the most common behavioural disorders, their signs, causes, and available support options.

## Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

### What Is ADHD?

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects a person's ability to regulate attention, control impulses, and manage activity levels. It typically begins in childhood and can continue into adolescence and adulthood.

### Individuals with ADHD may experience:

- **Inattention** (difficulty focusing, staying organised, or completing tasks)
- **Hyperactivity** (restlessness, excessive movement or talking)
- **Impulsivity** (acting without thinking, interrupting others, difficulty waiting)

### Possible Causes:



### Treatment & Support:

- Behavioural therapy
- Medication (when prescribed)
- Structured routines
- School and family support

ADHD affects both children and adults, and many successful professionals, entrepreneurs, and athletes live and thrive with it. It is a medical condition - not a result of laziness or lack of discipline and with the right support, individuals with ADHD can achieve success and lead fulfilling, meaningful lives.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

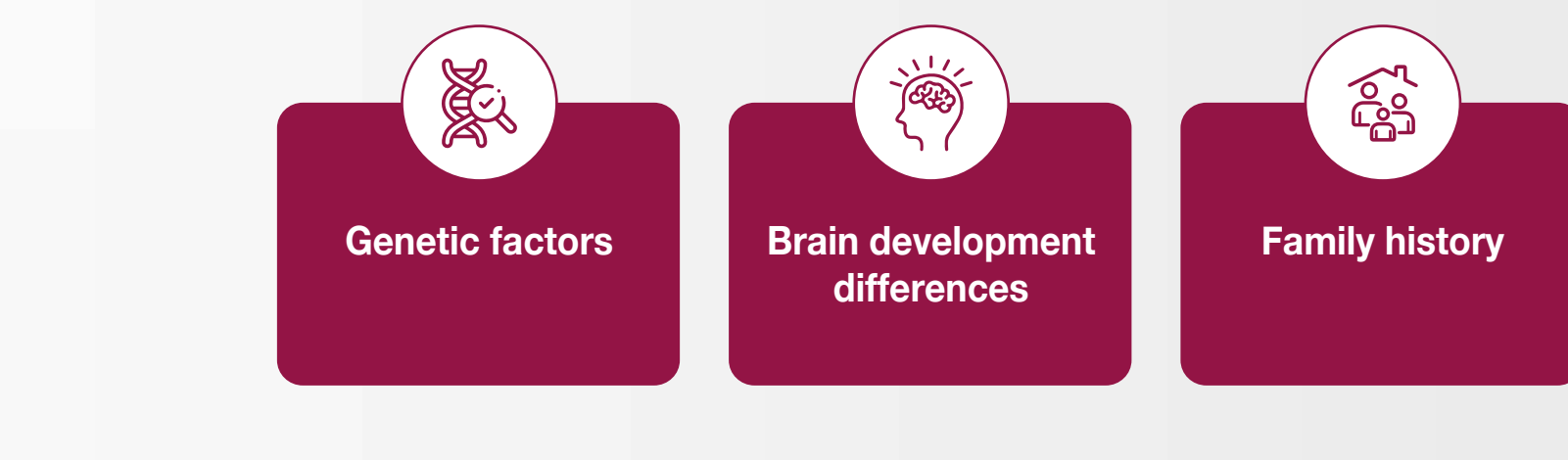
### What Is ASD?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental condition that affects how individuals communicate, interact socially, and behave. It is called a "spectrum" because each person with ASD has a unique range of strengths and challenges, and no two individuals experience it in the same way.

### Key Signs & Symptoms:

- ✓ Difficulty with social communication
- ✓ Repetitive behaviours or routines
- ✓ Limited eye contact
- ✓ Sensitivity to sounds, lights, textures, or touch
- ✓ Strong focus on specific interests

### Possible Causes:



### Treatment & Support:

- Early intervention programmes
- Behavioural therapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy

Many individuals with autism possess unique strengths, including exceptional memory, creativity, attention to detail, and problem-solving skills.

[Learn more: Autism spectrum disorder \(ASD\) | Autism Speaks](#)

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

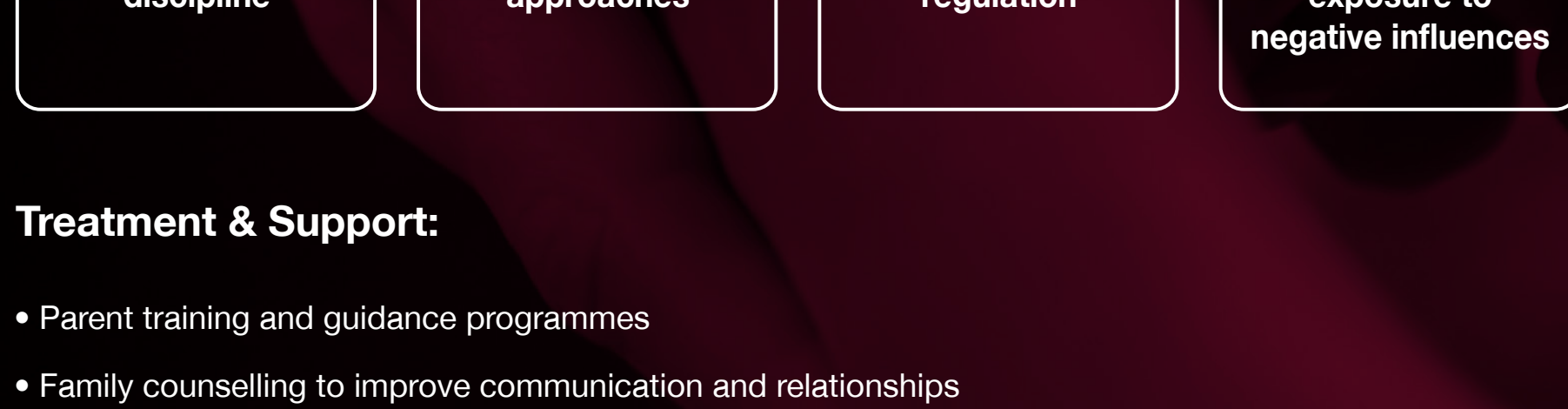
### What Is ODD?

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a behavioural condition characterised by ongoing patterns of defiant, disobedient, and hostile behaviour, particularly toward authority figures such as parents, teachers, or caregivers. These behaviours are more frequent and intense than typical childhood reactions and can impact relationships and daily functioning.

### Key Signs & Symptoms:

- ✓ Frequent temper outbursts and irritability
- ✓ Arguing with adults or refusing to follow rules
- ✓ Deliberately annoying others or being easily annoyed
- ✓ Blaming others for mistakes or misbehaviour
- ✓ Showing resentment, anger, or spiteful behaviour

### Possible Causes:



### Treatment & Support:

- Parent training and guidance programmes
- Family counselling to improve communication and relationships
- Behavioural therapy to develop coping and problem-solving skills
- Positive reinforcement strategies to encourage appropriate behaviour

With the right support, structure, and understanding, children with ODD can learn to manage their emotions, improve their behaviour, and build healthier relationships.

## Anxiety Disorders

### What are Anxiety Disorders?

Anxiety disorders are a group of mental health conditions characterised by excessive fear, worry, or nervousness that can interfere with a person's daily life and overall wellbeing. While experiencing occasional anxiety is normal, persistent and overwhelming anxiety may require attention and support.

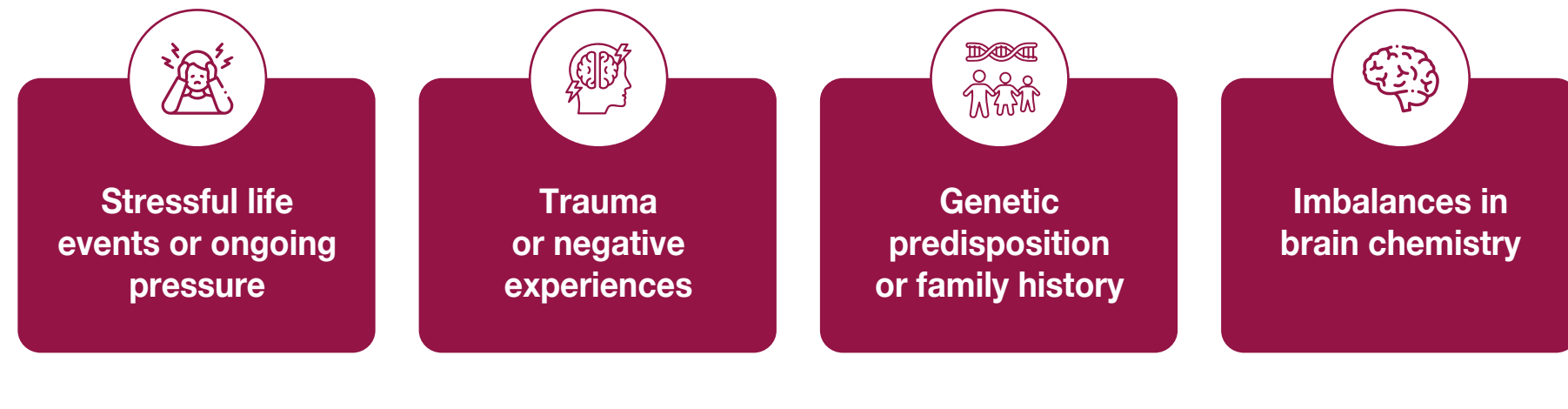
### Common Types:

- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Specific Phobias

### Key Signs & Symptoms:

- ✓ Persistent or excessive worry
- ✓ Restlessness or feeling constantly "on edge"
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating
- ✓ Sleep disturbances
- ✓ Avoidance of certain situations or activities

### Possible Causes:



### Treatment & Support:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to manage thoughts and behaviours
- Mindfulness and relaxation techniques to reduce stress
- Stress management and coping strategies
- Medication, when prescribed by a healthcare professional

With the right support and early intervention, individuals with anxiety disorders can effectively manage their symptoms and maintain a healthy, balanced life.

[Learn more: Anxiety Disorders - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)

## How can we support mental wellbeing?

Creating a supportive environment at home, school, and the workplace plays a vital role in promoting mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. Small, consistent actions can make a meaningful difference in how individuals feel, cope, and thrive.

### Practical Tips:

- ✓ Encourage open and honest conversations about emotions
- ✓ Maintain healthy sleep patterns and balanced nutrition
- ✓ Promote regular physical activity to support both mental and physical health
- ✓ Help reduce stigma surrounding mental health by fostering understanding and acceptance
- ✓ Seek professional support when needed
- ✓ Recognise and celebrate individual strengths and achievements

By taking these steps, we can contribute to a more supportive, positive, and mentally healthy community.

## Key Takeaway

Behavioural disorders are genuine health conditions and should never be seen as a reflection of an individual's character, upbringing, or personal strength. With increased awareness, early identification, and compassionate support, we can make a meaningful difference in helping individuals thrive and reach their full potential. Creating a supportive environment that values understanding and inclusion is essential for building a mentally healthy and resilient community.

It is important to approach individuals with empathy and patience, listen without judgment, communicate calmly and respectfully, and focus on their strengths rather than their challenges. Encouraging professional support when needed, along with providing consistent reassurance and understanding, can significantly improve outcomes and overall wellbeing. Together, small acts of compassion can create a lasting positive impact.

### Learn More:

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health>

[About Behavioural Health | Mental Health | CDC](#)

[Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\) in children - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)

[Oppositional defiant disorder \(ODD\) - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)