



Building a Positive Parent-Child Relationship: An Antidote to Defiant Behavior.

September
2024

Housekeeping

- Our goal is to have this be an interactive session, so please submit your questions throughout the presentation via the chat box.
- We will send an email of the recording and the presentation slides, along with links to resources discussed.
- We'd love to hear from you! If we don't cover something, or if your question isn't answered, contact us at memberinfo@vhan.com.

Meet the Experts



Steven Shampain,
MA, LPC-MHSP

Executive Clinical Director-
Group Practice
HopeNation



Adesola "Busola" Ojo

National Certified Counselor
Service provider in Tennessee
and Texas



Megan Adkins Witt

Licensed Professional
Counselor
HopeNation

Let's take a minute to introspect

(Put your answers in the chat)

What is the first positive thing that comes to your mind about your child or a child in your life?

What is the most challenging encounter you have had with that child or any other child in your life?

Think about someone who was important to you when you were growing up. What made you think of this person? What did this person “do” to make you feel that way?

Let's talk about defiant behavior

Every behavior is **purposeful**:

→ To get something

→ To avoid something

Why do children behave defiantly?

Typical Part of Development

- Lack of language or social skills
- Brain development and immaturity
- Temperament and genetics
- Stress
- Peer influence
- Quest for autonomy and egocentrism
- Because it works!

Might Require Additional Clinical Support

- Insecure attachment
- Psychological disorders, genetics, environment, and learned behavior
- Emotional dysregulation and frustration intolerance

Strategies for Addressing Defiant Behavior

Strategy 1: Connection

Why Connect?

- Mixture of feelings and behaviors
- Challenging behaviors make crucial parent-child connection hard
- Need to strive and be resilient
- To build interaction skills and learn new behaviors

How to Connect – Powerful Parenting Practices

- Spend quality time together
- Make everyday moments more playful and interactive
- Use affirmations to encourage and motivate
- Encourage your child's creativity and imagination
- Avoid power struggles
- Understand their behaviors: to Get or to Avoid
- Keep it positive – what you want v. what you don't
- Double the impact with physical warmth
- Be sincere and genuine
- Be specific-say what you see
- Encourage your child in front of others



Benefits of Connection

- ✓ Increased self-esteem
- ✓ Child is more connected to parent
- ✓ Child is when more responsive to the adult
- ✓ More pleasant household environment
- ✓ Child will grow up to have good relationships with own children
- ✓ Child learns to interact with others
- ✓ Child is happy

Strategy 2: Why We Set Boundaries

1

Safety and
Security

2

Promoting
Independence

3

Building
Respect

4

Emotional
Development

How to Set Boundaries:



Be Clear &
Consistent



Involve your
Child



Use Positive
Language



Lead by
Example

Strategy 3: Choices + Consequences

Offering Choices

Children are sponges. They are **constantly taking in information**. When children are given too much information to process at once, it can be overwhelming, and the outcome will not be productive.



When dealing with different situations, it is important to break down tasks for children to:

Help them understand exactly what you are saying.

Give them a sense of control and/or independence.

The younger the child, the more specific the language.

For example,
You want your 3-year-old child to start helping clean their room.

Susie, I want you to help mommy clean your room

Would you like to put your Barbies in the basket or pick up your socks?”

This gives Susie a choice. The choice is not whether Susie will help clean or not, but what task she would prefer.



What if my kid refuses?

Implement those natural consequences.

The Importance of Natural Consequences

1

Sometimes, kids get grumpy (just like us!) and don't want to cooperate.

2

As long as the consequence will not seriously harm, it is a good teaching tool.

3

James and his Coat example



Importance of Follow-Through with Consequences:

Teach Accountability: Following through with consequences reinforces the idea that actions have repercussions.

Avoid Miscommunication: It is best to prepare for situations beforehand. If your child makes a bad choice, the consequence has already been laid out. This can help prevent making rash punishments.

Encourage Trust: Consistency in enforcing boundaries build trust.

Reduce Defiance: When children understand that boundaries are non-negotiable and that there are consequences for crossing them, they're less likely to test limits excessively.

Support Growth: Consequences should be seen as learning opportunities rather than punishments.



They Keys to Managing Defiance:

- 1. Stay Calm:** When faced with defiance, maintain a calm demeanor. Reacting emotionally can escalate the situation.
- 2. Reinforce Open Communication:** Encourage your child to express their feelings about the boundaries.
- 3. Be Flexible (When Appropriate):** Sometimes, boundaries may need slight adjustments based on circumstances.
- 4. Praise Positive Behavior:** Acknowledge and reward good behavior when your child respects boundaries.



When should I seek additional support?

While all children go through difficult time periods, some children struggle more than others. Seek out professional help when:

1. Your child is unable to soothe themselves, even after months of practicing.
2. Your child is not displaying any type of empathy or compassion for others.
3. Your child continues to put themselves in potentially dangerous situations, without seeming to care about their safety.
4. Your child is hurting themselves or other people.



Don't Dismay!

One of the bravest acts as a parent is to admit that you need help.

It takes a village

You are also continuing to learn and grow.
Give yourself grace.

Questions?

Please enter your questions into the chat box.

You can find additional resources at [wellmoment.org](https://www.wellmoment.org).

Steven Shampain: sshampain@hopenationcounseling.com

Megan Witt: mwitt@hopenationcounseling.com

Busola Ojo: aojo@hopenationcounseling.com

Vanderbilt Health

Affiliated Network

Hope
Nation
Counseling Services

www.HopeNationCounseling.com