

Externalizing Challenges



What are externalizing mental health challenges?



- Difficulty with self-control of emotions and behavior
- Specific actions that violate the rights of others
- Actions that bring the youth into significant conflict with societal norms and/or authority figures
- "Acting out" behavior challenges

What do they look like in students?



- **Angry or irritable mood** — *loses temper, easily annoyed, angry/resentful, acts like doesn't care*
- **Argumentative or defiant** — *doesn't follow rules, annoys others, blames others*
- **Seeks revenge** — *preoccupied with getting back at others*
- **Aggression** — *kicking, pushing, shoving, spitting, name calling, insults*
- **Property destruction or theft** — *stealing, vandalism*
- **Physical cruelty to people or animals** — *hurting pets, harming siblings*
- **Truancy after age 13** — *consistently not showing up for school, showing up late, cutting class*
- **Has run away at least two times**

Why do they matter?



- Externalizing behaviors get in the way of developing positive, supportive relationships
- Increase the youth's risk of engaging in other risky behavior (e.g., illegal activities, risky sexual behavior, substance use, violence, bullying)
- Youth are more likely to hang out with peers with similar difficulties which magnifies their risk
- Interfere with academic learning and learning of other students
- Impact overall sense of school safety and positive school climate