

Classroom Suggestions:

- If possible, try to create an atmosphere of empathy and tolerance in the classroom. Students with Tourette Syndrome are often ridiculed by others due to their involuntary physical and vocal symptoms. A climate of acceptance and relaxation may help diminish symptoms.
- Let the student decide if he/she chooses to disclose their disability to the class. Some students prefer to openly identify their condition due to the physical/vocal symptoms of the disorder; others prefer not to disclose. Instructors should not disclose the student's condition to the class or urge the student to do so if his/her preference is not to reveal the condition to others.
- If the student's symptoms do not negatively affect the learning environment for others, try to ignore them

and proceed with instruction as usual.

- Sensory overload can exacerbate symptoms for these students. Monitoring vocal and background noise, lighting, and distractions may assist these students.

Tourette Syndrome

**For further information or assistance, please contact
Disability Services
C-218
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Tourette Syndrome

Tourette Syndrome is a neurological condition characterized by involuntary body movements or vocalizations. It is not a behavioral disorder that can be controlled or diminished by training or counseling. It is a genetic disorder caused by abnormal transmission of dopamine and serotonin. Students with this condition are of normal intelligence.

Approximately 200,000 people in the U.S. have the most severe form of Tourette Syndrome and about one in 100 have milder forms of the disorder. Persons with this condition experience sensations of urgency that compel them to display involuntary movement or vocalization. These movements or vocalizations can vary in type, frequency, and severity and may worsen during periods of stress, anxiety, fatigue, illness, or excitement. It is important to remember that students displaying these behaviors are not intentionally trying to disturb, offend, or gain attention.

Physical Characteristics

- Sudden, repeated, involuntary body movements
- Head jerking and eye blinking
- Facial grimacing
- Shoulder shrugging
- Finger flexing
- Sticking out tongue

Vocalizations

- Clicking of tongue
- Grunting
- Yelling
- Hiccupping
- Throat clearing
- Coughing or snorting
- Coprolalia (Uttering swear words)
- Echolalia (Repeating the words of others)

Socialization Issues

- Discomfort in new situations/group work
- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Feeling rejected by peers
- Shame
(due to inability to control movements/vocalizations)

Medication Issues

Students with Tourette Syndrome often take medications to attempt to reduce symptoms, but there is no medication that is completely effective in symptom management. Medication regimens may also affect the students' ability to concentrate.

Additional Learning Issues

- Many students with Tourette syndrome additionally are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or additional neurobehavioral conditions.
- Students with Tourette Syndrome may display trouble processing information, writing, paying attention for long periods of time, and staying organized.