



The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR), like DSM-5, features a lifespan approach to mental health. The organization of childhood conditions underscores how they can continue to manifest at various stages of life and may be impacted by the developmental continuum that influences many disorders.

Some of the diagnostic criteria were updated in DSM-5-TR to capture the experiences and symptoms of children more precisely. In addition, DSM-5-TR, like DSM-5, emphasized that similar to any medical issue, no child should ever be diagnosed without a careful, comprehensive evaluation, and no medication should be prescribed without equal vigilance. Parents play an integral role in this process, as many of the DSM criteria require that symptoms be observed by them or other individuals who interact regularly with the child.

More Precise Criteria

Existing criteria have been updated in DSM-5-TR to provide more precise descriptions and reflect the scientific advances and clinical experience of the last decade. Below are brief summaries of changes to select disorders.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Criterion A phrase “as manifested by the following” was revised to read “as manifested by all of the following” to improve its clarity. The revision by the work group was made to maintain a high diagnostic threshold by requiring “all of the following,” and not “any of the following” criteria, as could be mistakenly implied by the previous wording of the criterion.

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder

The text in the “Development and Course” section describing the age range at which disruptive mood dysregulation disorder can be diagnosed and for which validity is established was updated to “6–18 years,” as noted in criterion G.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

For children 6 years and younger, the note that “witnessing does not include events that are witnessed only in electronic media, television, movies, or pictures” in Criterion A.2 was removed for its redundancy, given that criterion A.2 already indicates that the events occurring to others must be witnessed in person.

Prolonged Grief Disorder

Prolonged Grief Disorder is a new disorder in DSM-5-TR. Specific language was added to the criteria to define the difference between children and adolescents versus adults. The intent of that is to reflect current scientific evidence and highlight the different reactions children or adolescents might have in such situations.

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) will publish DSM-5-TR in 2022.

APA is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,400 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psychiatry.org. For more information, please contact APA Communications at 202-459-9732 or press@psych.org.

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