



MY CHILD CAN'T, OR WON'T?

Amy Craig, MA, LPC

Often parents wonder if their children's challenging behavior is something they can't change or they won't change. It is an important question since it helps us to know if they is a behavioral issue where the child is making poor choices or if they are dealing with a medical/mental health issue which is out of their control.

It can be helpful to think about the mental health history of the child's family. Is there a history of ADHD, mood disorders like depression or bipolar, anxiety, etc? When did the challenging behavior begin? Is there a pattern to the behavior or triggers which seem to make things worse? Sometimes it takes a professional to help determine possible causes of a child's behavior. However, it is always helpful to talk with those who are actively co-parenting with you. Taking about some of these simple questions may help you to step back and see the child's behaviors, and what they are communicating to you, from a new perspective.