SEMH Definition

"Challenging,
disruptive or
disturbing" Behaviour

EG anger, aggression
Withdrawal, defiance,
avoidance
Lack of engagement
Leaving seat/class/school
Isolation, self harm, substance
misuse
Eating disorders, physical symptoms
Toileting issues, sexualised behaviour

Driven by

Anxiety Fear Insecurity Frustration

Underlying Issues

Low level of resilience
Inability to trust self and others
Feeling emotionally and physically unsafe
Low self esteem
Lack of confidence (often masked by outward appearances)
Seeking relationships (often described as attention seeking)

Stemming from

Insecure attachment; Mental health need such as anxiety, conduct disorder, depression Issues with executive function, hormone regulation, sensory processing, motor skills, sleep, digestion, heart rate

Due to (Primary SEMH Need)

Unresolved trauma or unmet emotional needs, affecting the child's internal view of themselves and/or others, which adversely impacts on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and the ability to empathise with another. They have difficulties making and maintaining relationships and recognizing and engaging in socially acceptable behaviour.

May be as a result of: abuse, neglect, exploitation, unidentified or unaddressed additional need, unmet Parental needs, complicated bereavement or loss, exposure to criminal activity.

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Stemming from

Lack of understanding or being understood

Social interaction difficulties

Being unwell

Feeling different from others. Being unable to meet others' expectations

Bullying

Worrying about family members

Due to (not a primary SEMH need)

Speech and language or communication difficulty

Dyslexia, learning needs

Sensory impairment eg hearing, sight

Developmental delay, failure to thrive

Social care or parenting need Side effects of medication

Issues around identity or self image ASC

Medical Need