

## Strategy Matrix for Students with Tourette Syndrome Organization of Needs with Useful Interventions

**Disability:** OHI (other health impairment): Tourette Syndrome (TS)

**Student Strengths:** Students with TS have enhanced cognitive control due to skills developed in order to suppress tics. Students with TS also can be energetic, creative, empathetic, and usually have a good sense of humor.

Common Disability Characteristic that Interfere with Learning	Evidence-based Strategies to Increase Students School Success
<b>Academic</b> (reading, writing, math, science, social studies)	
Physical tics can interfere with handwriting or drawing. This can cause difficulties with note taking, written tests, or other class assignments that require fine motor skills (drawing, graphic design).	Providing students with copies of notes or lesson materials such as PowerPoints can help give students the resources they need to learn.
	Having students with TS partner with another student can help them complete activities without the need to physically contribute, but instead can contribute their thoughts. This allows students to showcase their strengths.
Students with TS can often have co-occurring conditions such as anxiety disorders, ADHD, OCD, and MEB. Anxiety disorders can interfere with test taking.	As an educator, it can be useful to gain a better understanding of your students' conditions. This can lead to a more empathetic view of your students and make them feel better understood.
	Discussing strategies with students to provide a better testing environment can help them with test taking. Some students may need to be in the classroom while others may perform better when placed in an alternative testing area.
<b>Social / School Skills</b>	
Students with TS can have verbal tics that may cause difficulty when participating in class discussions, answering questions posed by the teacher, or when asking questions to better understand lessons and course content.	Offering students options to answer questions in ways other than verbal communication can help them communicate better. An example would be to let a student write their questions or answers, rather than verbally replying.
	When participating in group work, allow students with TS to provide their insights with group members, but have other members of the group communicate their findings instead of putting the TS student "on the spot".
Students with TS may experience problems with social relationships due to being teased or bullied by other students. This can lead to mistrust and a disconnect with peers.	As an educator, it is important to maintain situational awareness in your classroom and school. If a bullying incident is identified, address this with both parties in an appropriate manner.
	Identify students in your class that are more empathetic and caring so that you can pair students with TS with a supportive group, rather than randomly assigning groups.
<b>Behavior / Organization</b>	
Students with TS can have severe tics that lead to fatigue and chronic pain. This can interfere with learning, and cause students to show behaviors that indicate a lack of caring. However, this is often just a misunderstanding.	Understand that students with TS are often misunderstood. TS is commonly thought to be a behavioral or emotional condition rather than a neurological condition. Recognizing this can lead to greater understanding and empathy for students who experience such challenges.
	If a student has to miss class because their physical condition becomes debilitating, provide them with the proper resources and course material so that they can still have the opportunity to learn at home. Additionally, make time to help students catch up on missed work during lunch, office hours, or before and after school.
Students with TS can have tics that increase their anxiety when they occur. Additionally, the increase in anxiety can cause their tics to become worse, creating a vicious cycle of difficulty in controlling behavior.	Avoid inappropriate disciplinary methods that punish students for behaviors or actions that they are unable to control as this will often increase their anxiety and further escalate the vicious cycle.
	Understand what each student needs when these situations arise. Some students may need to step out of class in order to calm themselves and gain some composure. Conversely, this isolation could cause some students to feel alone or unwanted. Discuss specific strategies with each student to help find the best method for them to overcome these hurdles.

