



DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDERS: OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (ODD) AND CONDUCT DISORDER (CD) FACT SHEET

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER involves hostile, inflexible behavior.

CONDUCT DISORDER involves intentional, physically aggressive and cruel behavior.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER is an ongoing pattern of uncooperative, defiant, and hostile behavior toward authority figures that seriously interferes with the child's or youth's day-to-day functioning.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER seriously affects all areas of a child's or youth's life – home, work, school, and social life.

CLINICAL SYMPTOMS

WHAT DOES A PARENT/CAREGIVER SEE?

Anger/Hostility	→	Negative; hostile; defiant; excessive arguing with adults; will not comply with adult requests and rules; intense rigidity; touchy; easily annoyed
Uncooperative/Defiant	→	Deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people; bullying; blaming others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior; lack of remorse; aggressive and cruel with people and animals; destructive; seeks revenge when things go badly; lying; stealing; conniving
Interpersonal Difficulties	→	Frightens and alienates family and classmates; anti-social; reckless; sociopathic behaviors causing serious harm to others; physical abuse; intimidation; loners who feel they have nothing to lose by acting worse

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES are treatments that have shown through clinical research to produce positive outcomes for children and their families.

The most common effective treatments for Disruptive Behavior Disorders are:

- **Parent Management Training**
- **Parent Psychoeducation**
- **Attending**
- **Praise**
- **Differential Reinforcement**
- **Commands**
- **Tangible Rewards**
- **Time Out**



The most common effective treatments for ODD and CD are:

Parent Management Training

This is a form of training that helps parents learn how to use behavioral techniques. These techniques include things like attending, praise, and active ignoring.

Parent Psychoeducation

Parent psychoeducation teaches parents about the child's or youth's illness and the effects on the child/youth. This helps them set more reasonable expectations for their child or youth. It also helps them know better how to work with the child's/youth's special needs. Psychoeducation helps them understand what to expect from the treatment sessions and how long the treatment might take. They will also learn what role the parent, the therapist and the child/youth play in the treatment, and that they will be a team that will work on this together.

Attending

The goal of attending is to teach the caregiver to pay attention to the child's or youth's positive behaviors. It is important to provide positive attention to the child/youth even if the child/youth has misbehaved at other times during the day. The caregiver is encouraged to set aside time during each day to work on an activity that the child/youth has chosen. Attending helps promote the child's or youth's sense of self-worth and also increases positive communications between the parent and child/youth.

Praise

This strategy teaches parents how to effectively use words to reward behaviors. Many times caregivers forget to let their children/youth know when they are on track. Remembering to praise children/youth when they behave well can improve their behavior. Praising them for their specific actions (rather than things they can't control) can build their self-esteem.

Differential Reinforcement

This is a way of helping the child or youth behave better through changing caregiver actions. Parents (with help, if needed) identify specific ways they want the child/youth to behave. They also may identify specific things they do not want the child/youth to do. The child/youth is taught which behaviors are acceptable and is rewarded for using them. A problem behavior is either ignored or mild punishment is used to discourage it.

Commands

This is a strategy that is used to help parents learn to give clear and consistent instructions to their children. Changing caregiver actions can often help to improve a child's/youth's behavior. Parents have expectations of their children. However, some ways of keeping children/youth on track are better than others. Commands are how parents tell children what to do. Parents can learn how to do this in a way that makes it more likely the child/youth will do what is asked. They often change how they respond to the child/youth when he or she chooses to obey or disobey.

Tangible Rewards

Tangible means using actual objects or activities as rewards for children and youth when they behave as requested. This can include gum, stickers, computer time, or small toys. (Intangible rewards are not objects and include things like praising or hugging the child/youth.) Tangible rewards can be helpful in promoting desired behaviors, particularly those that are more challenging for a child or youth to perform. Tangible rewards are often used at the same time as praise so that gradually the reward can be faded out and the praise is enough to continue the positive behavior.

Time Out

Sometimes children or youth need a break to calm down. Time out is a strategy that removes the child/youth from all activities and attention. Time out works best if it is relatively brief, and the child/youth has clear directions about what is expected. It is also helpful if the child/youth can learn to use this strategy to self-monitor behavior. (That is, learn to remove oneself as a way to calm down.)