

CONDUCT DISORDER

What is Conduct Disorder-

Conduct disorder, one of what are called “disruptive behavior disorders,” is characterized by emotionally and sometimes physically violent behavior and a disregard for others. Children with CD exhibit cruelty, from early pushing, hitting, and biting to, later, more than normal teasing and bullying, hurting animals, picking fights, theft, vandalism, and arson.¹

Symptoms:

- A persistent disregard for societal norms and the rights, feelings, and personal space of other people
- Getting gratification out of aggression, deceit, or coercion
- In a younger child, lying for the sake of lying, stealing items of no apparent worth, relentless bullying
- In an older child, picking fights, trespassing, lying, cheating, stealing, vandalism, and emotionally or physically abusive behavior, including wielding a deadly weapon or forcing sex
- Professionals also attempt to determine if the behavior is a negative adaptation to a troubled environment, a “learned” behavior, or if the gratification that comes from aggression seems to originate from within.¹

Treatment:

- Psychotherapy and behavioral therapy that ideally involves the child’s entire family and support network
- The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the more successful the therapy will be
- In younger children, parent-child interaction therapy or another parent management training is used to teach parents how to encourage desired behaviors and discourage disruptive one, and the child to control his behavior more effectively
- In adolescents, therapy may target not just the home life but interactions with authority figures at school, and peers
- Since conduct disorder is often (but not always) diagnosed along with other conditions that can be treated pharmacologically, a child may also go on medication as part of his therapy.¹