

## Conduct Disorder

Conduct disorder (CD) is defined as a behavioral and emotional disorder that is demonstrated through repetitive disruptive behavior and violence. The individual typically exhibits these behavior patterns in many different places including home, school, social situations. It causes noticeable impairment in everyday activities including social, academic, and family events.

## Signs & Symptoms

Children with conduct disorder often act without considering other people's feelings or emotions. They also have trouble reading social cues and expressing empathy or remorse, and commonly skip school or run away. Individuals with conduct disorder typically:

- Show hostility towards other children and animals
- Act deceptively or dishonestly
- Violate rules (stay out past curfew, use drugs or alcohol)
- Deliberately destroy property

## Causes & Risk Factors

There are many factors that can contribute to conduct disorder including biological factors, genetic factors such as frontal lobe damage, and environmental factors. The risk increases if the child is male, lives in poverty, has a family history of mental illness, or has experienced child abuse. Symptoms can range from mild to severe depending on the individual. Childhood-onset CD is characterized by at least one symptom that occurring before a child is ten years old. Adolescent-onset CD is characterized by symptoms being absent prior to age ten.

## Diagnosis & Treatment

A child psychiatrist or qualified mental health expert can diagnose a conduct disorder by talking with parents and teachers about the child's behavior and possible observation of the child to make the final diagnosis. Treatment depends on severity of the child's condition, the child's age, symptoms, and general health. Early diagnosis and treatment are necessary for the child to navigate developmental milestones and make a successful transition to adulthood. Treatment plans typically consist of cognitive behavioral therapy, family therapy, and peer group therapy.

**If your child is displaying the signs of conduct disorder, call our 24-Hour Helpline at 1.800.928.8000. We can help.**

Source – Johns Hopkins Medicine: [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/mental\\_health\\_disorders](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/mental_health_disorders)