

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder

Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD) is a childhood disorder characterized by intense anger, irritability, and frequent outbursts. Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder results in reactions to situations that are disproportionate and more intense than the expected response.

Signs & Symptoms

Children who have DMDD typically display symptoms before the age of 10, but they cannot be diagnosed before the age of 6 or after the age of 18. Common symptoms of DMDD include:

- Anger and/or irritability most of the day, almost every day
- Frequent, intense temper outbursts that occur three or more times a week
- Difficulty functioning at school, home and in social situations due to irritability

Causes & Risk Factors

It is not clear how widespread DMDD is in the general population, but it is common among children who visit pediatric mental health clinics. Researchers are exploring risk factors and brain mechanisms of this disorder.

Diagnosis & Treatment

For a child to be diagnosed with DMDD, symptoms must occur for at least consistent 12 months. The child's physician will look for severe temper outbursts that occur three or more times per week. During the 12-month period, the child must show symptoms consistently, meaning there is not a break of three or more months without symptoms. It is very important to get a professional evaluation and establish a treatment plan quickly, because DMDD is emotionally difficult for both the child and the parents. Treatment plans can consist of psychotherapy and medication if therapy alone does not help. Multiple research studies have shown that "parent training" can also be effective, which teaches parents practical ways to respond to irritable behavior and how to reward positive behavior.

If your child is showing signs of DMDD, please call our 24-Hour Helpline at 1.800.928.8000. We can help.

Source – National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/disruptive-mood-dysregulation-disorder-dmdd/disruptive-mood-dysregulation-disorder.shtml>

