

## SYMPTOMS/BEHAVIOURS













- Bullying or threatening classmates and others
- Poor attendance record or chronic truancy
- History of frequent suspensions
- Minimal empathy for others and a lack of appropriate feelings of guilt or remorse
- Low self-esteem masked by bravado
- Lying to peers or teachers
- Stealing from peers at school
- Frequent physical fights
- Weapon use
- Destruction of property

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Students with CD like to engage in power struggles. They often react negatively to direct demands or statements such as “you need to” or “you must”. They may challenge class rules, refuse to do assignments, and argue or fight with other students.

This behaviour can cause significant impairment in both social and academic function. Students with CD work best in environments with high staff/student ratios, one-on-one situations, and self-contained programs where there is plenty of structure and clearly defined guidelines. Frequent absences and refusal to complete assignments often lead to academic failure.

## SERIES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

-  Anxiety
-  Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
-  Asperger's Syndrome
-  Autism Spectrum Disorder
-  **Conduct Disorder**
-  Depression
-  Eating Disorders
-  Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
-  Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
-  Oppositional Defiant Disorder
-  Reactive Attachment Disorder
-  Tourette Syndrome

### TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CONTACT:

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## CONDUCT DISORDER

# ABOUT CONDUCT DISORDER

**All children have bouts of bad behaviour. When misbehaviour progresses at a continuous rate, this could be a clue that the child may have one of two disruptive behaviour disorders: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD). A child who displays persistent temper tantrums, is disobedient, and argues with adults and peers on a regular basis may have ODD. More serious problems like frequent physical aggression, stealing, cruelty or bullying may be a sign of CD.**

Youth with CD are highly visible and demonstrate a complex group of behavioural and emotional difficulties. Serious, repetitive and persistent misbehaviour is a common symptom. These behaviours fall into four main groups: aggressive behaviour toward people or animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, and serious violations of rules.

Disruptive behaviour disorders appear to be more common in boys than in girls and in urban areas. Between five per cent and 15 per cent of school-aged children are diagnosed with ODD, while some four per cent are diagnosed with CD.

To receive a CD diagnosis, an individual must display three or more characteristic behaviours over the last 12 months, with at least one prevalent during the last six months. Diagnosing CD can be difficult as youth are constantly changing.

Another disorder associated with CD is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Many children with CD also have learning disabilities. Approximately one-third are depressed and often stop exhibiting these behaviour problems as the depression is treated. Many youth with CD could have life-long patterns of anti-social behaviour and are at a higher risk for mood or anxiety disorders. But for many, the disorder may subside later in adulthood.

Social context such as poverty and high crime may influence what is viewed as anti-social behaviour. In these cases, CD may be misapplied to individuals whose behaviours may be protective or exist within cultural context. A child with suspected CD should be referred for assessment. If symptoms are mild, the child may receive services and remain in the school environment. More severely troubled youth, however, may need more specialized educational environments.

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS AND CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

- Ensure curriculum is at the appropriate level. Frustration sets in easily if a task is too difficult, and boredom if the task is too easy. Both will lead to problems in the classroom.
- Avoid infantile materials to teach basic skills. Materials should be age appropriate, positive and relevant to the lesson.
- Consider using technology. Computers with active programming tend to be beneficial for students with CD.
- Give students options. Allow them to work outside the traditional school setting.
- Be aware that adults can unconsciously form and express negative impressions of low performing, unco-operative students. Try to monitor your impressions, keep them neutral, communicate positively and give students the benefit of the doubt whenever possible.
- Remain calm, respectful, and detached and avoid power struggles and arguments.
- Avoid direct demands or statements such as "you need to" or "you must".
- Avoid escalating prompts such as shouting, touching, nagging or cornering a student.
- Establish rules that are few, fair, clear, displayed, taught and consistently enforced. Be clear about what is non-negotiable.
- Encourage students to participate in the establishment of rules, routines, schedules and expectations.
- Teach social skills such as anger management, conflict resolution and appropriate assertiveness.

