

CONDUCT DISORDER



About Conduct Disorder

A diagnosis of conduct disorder is determined by a pattern of behavior in which an individual violates rules or infringes upon others with aggression, theft, or other inappropriate behavior.

What Does It Look Like?

As identified in the DSM-5,¹ the following symptoms are associated with a diagnosis of conduct disorder. Additional specifiers, such as severity and emotional limitations, are available within the DSM-5 to further clarify a diagnosis.

Theft or Dishonesty

- Steals items or information
- Lies in order to procure items, assistance, or to get out of commitments.
- Illegally enters a building, home, or car that is not one's own

Hostile Behavior

- Uses bullying or intimidation of others.
- Uses a weapon that has the potential to cause significant harm towards others.
- Instigates fights with others.
- Has caused physical harm to others or to animals.
- Has committed rape or other forced sexual interaction.

Property Damage

- Has destroyed property (not with fire).
- Has set fire to cause harm or damage.

Rule Violations

- Frequently breaks curfew, starting before the age of 13.
- Has left home without permission (overnight or longer).
- Engaged in school truancy before the age of 13.

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE:
CONDUCT DISORDER

Symptoms and Interventions

	Symptoms	Interventions
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is involved in altercations with other students (hitting, fighting, pushing) • Is engaged in bullying (victim or perpetrator) • Is truant or frequently absent from school • Experiences difficulties with peer and staff relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider appropriate seating arrangement for student, avoiding sitting near students with whom the student has had altercations or has bullied • Create lessons or social skills groups to practice alternate behaviors such as conflict resolution and emotional regulation • Identify supportive figures for student to build relationships with • Practice calm, positive interactions with student, particularly when student is confrontational or combative
School Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheats or lies • Defies directives • Is detached or disengaged with assignments and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor student's completion of assignments as appropriate • Avoid using directives that may appear confrontational • Identify methods of instruction or completion that the student enjoys and responds to (e.g., using the computer, artwork, music)
Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in theft or vandalism • Defies directives, such as staying seated or remaining on task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor student's desk or locker as appropriate, without violating personal privacy or assuming involvement • Teach social skills for topics such as responsibility, personal privacy and space, and sharing • Use methods of completing work that utilizes student strengths (e.g., technology)
Outside the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in behavior that is considered risky or dangerous • Is exposed to trauma or toxic stress outside of the classroom • Experiences or is engaged in bullying (victim or perpetrator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with parents or caregivers to identify patterns in behaviors or events at home that may impact the student's behavior (e.g., lack of sleep) • Consider a crisis plan to use for when student is exhibiting violent or dangerous behavior (e.g., staff members who should interact with student) • Understand student's environment outside of the classroom and provide supports as appropriate and needed
Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences difficulties with unexpected transitions or schedule changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create structured routines and schedules that are predictable • Work with other staff members to develop consistent rules and interactions (e.g., remaining calm, identifying triggers)

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Student Strengths

- Smart
- Resilient
- Creative
- Sensitive
- Energetic

References

- ¹ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Resources

- **Child Mind Institute**
<http://www.childmind.org/en/health/disorder-guide/conduct-disorder>
- **AACAP**
http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Conduct-Disorder-033.aspx
- **UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/conduct/conduct.pdf>