

FACT SHEET

Disruptive Behavior Disorders: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) & Conduct Disorder (CD)



**Federation of Families
of South Carolina**

A Voice for Children's Mental Health in SC

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDERS

- **OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER** involves hostile, inflexible behavior.
- **CONDUCT DISORDER** involves intentional, physically aggressive and cruel behavior.
- **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER** is an ongoing pattern of uncooperative, defiant, and hostile behavior toward authority figures that seriously interferes with the child's day-to-day functioning.
- **DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER** seriously affects all areas of a child's life – home, work, school, and social life.

CLINICAL SYMPTOMS	WHAT DOES A PARENT/CAREGIVER SEE?
Anger/Hostility	Negative; hostile; defiant; excessive arguing with adults; will not comply with adult requests and rules; intense rigidity; touchy; easily annoyed
Uncooperative/Defiant	Deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people; bullying; blaming others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior; lack of remorse; aggressive and cruel with people and animals; destructive; seeks revenge when things go badly; lying; stealing; conniving
Interpersonal Difficulties	Frightens and alienates family and classmates; anti-social; reckless; sociopathic behaviors causing serious harm to others; physical abuse; intimidation; loners who feel they have nothing to lose by acting worse

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES are treatments that have been shown through clinical research to produce positive outcomes for children and their families.

The most common effective treatment strategies for Disruptive Behavior Disorders are:

- **Praise**
- **Tangible Rewards**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Differential Reinforcement**
- **Time Out**
- **Commands**
- **Caregiver Psychoeducation**

Disruptive Behavior Disorder treatment strategy descriptions:

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Praise

This strategy teaches parents how to effectively use words to reward behaviors. Many times caregivers forget to let their children know when they are on track. Remembering to praise children when they behave well can improve their behavior. Praising them for their specific actions (rather than things they can't control) can build their self-esteem.

Tangible Rewards

Tangible means using actual objects or activities as rewards for children when they behave as requested. This can include gum, stickers, computer time, or small toys. (Intangible rewards are not objects and include things like praising or hugging the child.) Tangible rewards can be helpful in promoting desired behaviors, particularly those that are more challenging for a child to perform. Tangible rewards are often used at the same time as praise so that gradually the reward can be faded out and the praise is enough to continue the positive behavior.



Problem-Solving

Children with mental illnesses often think their problems are too big to handle. Problem solving is a strategy that teaches a child how to clearly identify a problem, look at all possible solutions, and choose a solution. They also learn to evaluate their choices, and, if necessary, come up with different solutions. This strategy teaches children how to use problem solving in their day-to-day activities.

Differential Reinforcement

This strategy teaches the caregiver to how remove attention and rewards from minor disruptive behaviors (actively ignoring them) and to provide increased attention and rewards for appropriate behaviors (reinforcing them). Over time, the caregiver is able to control the environment in a way that makes it more likely that the child will behave more appropriately.

Time Out

Sometimes children need a break to calm down. Time out is a strategy that removes the child from all activities and attention. Time out works best if it is relatively brief, and the child has clear directions about what is expected. It is also helpful if the child can learn to use this strategy to self-monitor behavior (i.e., learn to remove oneself as a way to calm down).

Commands

This is a strategy that is used to help parents learn to give clear and consistent instructions to their children. Changing caregiver actions can often help to improve a child's behavior. Parents have expectations of their children. However, some ways of keeping children on track are better than others. Commands are how parents tell children what to do. Parents can learn how to do this in a way that makes it more likely the child will do what is asked. They often change how they respond to the child when he or she chooses to obey or disobey.

Caregiver Psychoeducation

The purpose of psychoeducation is to help the caregiver understand how the child's illness affects their behaviors, what kind of activities or treatment might help, and that there are others who have similar problems. This type of education helps them understand what will happen in the treatment sessions and how long the treatment might take. They will also learn what role the parent, the therapist, and the child will play in the treatment, and that they will be a team that will work on problems together.