

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR DISORDER

CAUSES, SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT



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Introduction

When a teen is characterized as consistently disruptive, defiant, uncooperative or hostile towards those in authority, they may be diagnosed with Disruptive Behavior Disorders (DBD). Disruptive Behaviors Disorder is a group of behavioral disorders that seriously impacts and prohibits a child's or teen's daily functioning.

Disruptive behaviors in children and teenagers not only affects the individual, but the entire family. The teen may be disruptive to activities, [rebellious](#), defiant, or intentionally break rules. Oftentimes the teen will also exhibit [anger](#), making them difficult to calm down and to restore peace in the home.

There are two main disorders that fall under disruptive behavior disorders: [oppositional defiant disorder \(ODD\)](#) and conduct disorder. Both disorders are similar, distinguished namely by the severity of their symptoms. In comparison, conduct disorder tends to be the more serious of the two.

According to Ascent Children's Health Services, it is important that children suffering from ODD or Conduct disorder seek help immediately. These behaviors can severely impact all areas of life for the teens including: [social](#), occupational, and academic functioning. Treatment can allow the child or teen to learn more positive ways to deal with life situations. The sooner that therapy is begun, the more likely it is to be successful.

Statistics on Disruptive Behavior Disorders in Teens and Children

Disruptive behavior disorders are believed to be the most common psychiatric conditions diagnosed in children worldwide and these disorders have been found to be more prevalent in boys than in girls.

According to Valley Behavioral Health Systems, approximately 1-4% of teens and adolescents in the United States have been diagnosed with conduct disorder. 10% of children have been diagnosed with [oppositional defiant disorder \(ODD\)](#). Other studies suggest numbers can get as high as 6% for conduct disorder and 16% for ODD depending on the population.

Other Disorders Can Also Exist in Teens with DBD

It is quite common for disruptive behavior disorders to also exist in conjunction with other behavioral and mental health disorders. While DBD is typically thought of as a combination of ODD and conduct behavior, additional diagnosis may include:

- [Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\)](#)

- [Anxiety Disorders](#)
- [Depressive Disorder](#)
- [Substance Abuse](#)

Causes for Disruptive Behavior Disorders (DBD)

While an exact cause of disruptive behavior disorders are not known, studies and research have found that there are contributing factors to this behavior. It is believed that genetics, physical factors, and environmental components all play an important role in a teen's development of DBD. Genetics: Children and teens who have DBD typically have a member of their family who also suffers from a similar illness. The family may have a history of mental illness including mood disorders, personality disorders, and/or anxiety disorders. This theory leads many to believe that genetics plays a part in developing symptoms of disruptive behavior disorders.

Physical Factors: One theory concerning the onset of DBD is that the brain's frontal lobe is not fully evolved. The frontal lobe is responsible for the development of a person's emotions; it is essentially the home of the development of a teen's personality. When there is a chemical imbalance in the frontal lobe, the result can be an inability to communicate properly. This dysfunction can trigger DBD symptoms.

Ascent Clinical Health Systems cites children with low birth weight or those suffering from neurological damage are at a much greater risk of developing DBD.

Environmental Components: The home life of a child can also impact their likelihood of developing symptoms of disruptive behavior disorders. A child that is in a chaotic environment or does not receive appropriate discipline may act out in order to get attention or get their way. Valley Behavioral Health Systems also cites atypical mother-child interaction at the time of birth as having an effect on the onset of DBD. Children who are rejected as babies, separated from their birth parents, or placed in foster care are at an increased risk for DBD.

Children living in poverty or who have witnessed domestic violence have a higher risk for developing behavioral disorders. If a child is physically, emotionally, or sexually abused, they are at risk of developing DBD later in their childhood or teenage years.

Risk Factors of Developing DBD in Teens

Children and teens who are exposed to risk factors may be more likely to develop DBD. These factors include:

- Exposure to violence or violent acts
- Chaotic or dysfunctional family life
- Family history of mental illness or substance abuse
- Abuse or Neglect during childhood
- Inconsistent parenting

Symptoms of Disruptive Behavior Disorders (DBD) in Teens

Disruptive behavior disorders will be exhibited differently depending on the age and temperament of the child or teen. The specific type of behavioral disorder the teen has will also greatly impact the symptoms of the disorder. Social skills and coping mechanisms will also greatly affect the severity of the symptoms.

Symptoms can be broken up into three general categories: behavioral symptoms, cognitive symptoms, and psychosocial symptoms.

Behavioral Symptoms:

- Social Isolation
- [Bullying](#)
- Seeking Revenge
- Lying
- Stealing
- Destruction of Property
- Accusing Others
- Defying or Refusing Boundaries/Rules
- Cruelty to Animals
- Addiction to Fire
- Easily Loses Temper
- Argues with those in Authority
- Deliberately Annoys Others

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Lack of problem-solving skills
- Difficulty concentrating
- Frustration
- Loss of Memory
- Little Judgement in Speaking

Psychosocial Symptoms:

- Lack of Empathy
- Lack of Remorse
- Negativity
- Chronic Annoyance or Irritability
- Low Self-Esteem
- Spiteful
- Frightening or Alienating Others

- Rigid
- Angry
- Lonely

Risks of Disruptive Behavior Disorders (DBD) in Teens

If a child exhibits signs of Disruptive Behavior Disorders it is very important to seek immediate treatment. When left without proper care, a teen can develop long term consequences. The effects of untreated behavior disorders can include:

- Development of Antisocial Personality Disorder
- Criminal Involvement
- Incarceration
- Substance Abuse
- Alcoholism
- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Domestic Abuse
- Child Abuse
- Risky Sexual Behavior
- Social Isolation

Treatment for Disruptive Behavior Disorders

As the parent of a teen with a disruptive behavioral disorder, you may feel as though your life has been turned upside down. Your teen may exhibit behavioral symptoms of a variety of disorders, leaving you questioning where to begin in terms of treatment. Consider a residential treatment facility like Shepherds Hill Academy.

Shepherds Hill Academy is a residential therapeutic boarding school with a [wilderness component](#). Shepherds Hill has extensive experience working with and treating students with a wide range of behavioral disorders. Our highly trained therapists and counselors work with your teen to determine the best and most effective way to reach their goals.

Our [therapeutic program](#) offers one-on-one therapy sessions, allowing your teen to candidly open up about their struggles. These sessions allow our team to personalize a plan to help your teen heal. Group therapy sessions help your teen to interact in a healthy environment with their peers, challenging each other to grow and develop positive behavior and social skills. Equine therapy helps to further develop character and positive coping habits and skills.

Our wilderness program will take your teen out of their comfort zone. Separated from modern conveniences, technology, peer pressure, and popular culture, your teen will be able to get to the root of their behavioral issues and work towards lasting healing.

Is your teen in crisis? Are you looking for hope for their behavioral disorder? Contact Shepherds Hill Academy today by phone or by filling out our [online inquiry form](#).

Article Resources:

- Ascent Children's Health Services, Effects, Signs & Symptoms of Disruptive Behavior Disorder, Retrieved from:
<http://www.valleybehavioral.com/disorders/disruptive-behavior/signs-symptoms-causes>
- Valley Behavioral Health System, Signs & Symptoms of Disruptive Behavior Disorder, Retrieved from:
<http://www.ascentchs.com/mental-health/disruptive-behavior/symptoms-signs-effects/>.