

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder in Children & Teens

What is Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD)?

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD) is a condition that causes a child or teen to frequently feel very irritable or angry and often results in a temper and outbursts that are much larger than the situation warrants. For example, having a verbal or physical outburst about spilling a glass of milk. Their responses to situations are often much bigger than what is appropriate for their age and developmental stage.

Most children and teens experience different moods and ups and downs throughout the day but DMDD goes much further than the occasional "moodiness" and youth with DMDD struggle to regulate their emotions. If a youth has DMDD, they are experiencing severe struggles with their behavior that may require professional support for regulation.



Signs & Symptoms

For most children, DMDD symptoms begin before age 10. A child with this disorder will most likely experience one or more of the following:

- Acting irritable and/or angry most of the day, nearly every day
- Frequent, severe tantrums (verbal and/or physical) that occur multiple times per week and do not match the severity of the situation
- Challenges functioning at home, in school and/or in relationships due to irritability or anger

Our Locations

KANSAS CITY
4300 Brenner Dr.
Kansas City, KS 66104

WICHITA
1507 W. 21st St. N.
Wichita, KS 67203

HAYS
205 E 7th St.
Hays, KS 67601

What You Can Do to Help

- **Seek professional help.** It's important to have a physician or licensed mental health professional examine the child for an accurate assessment and diagnosis of their physical and mental health.
- **If the child expresses thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or violence against another person, call 911 immediately.** Take these statements very seriously and get them professional help as soon as possible.
- **Encourage the use of coping skills** that will help the child regulate their emotions (i.e., deep breathing, meditation, exercise, listening to music, etc.).
- **Work closely with the child's teachers** and school guidance counselors to ensure everyone knows how to best support the child.
- **Join a training for parents/caregivers** to learn skills for managing difficult behaviors in children.
- **Be observant of their behaviors and help them keep track of when feelings of anger and irritability occur.** Tracking this over time can help identify triggers, what treatment approaches are most effective or any additional concerns.



Contact KVC Hospitals for Support

KVC Hospitals is a network of nonprofit children's psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers serving youth ages 6 to 18. Each year, we give thousands of youth a safe place to heal, build resilience, and overcome struggles with behavioral and mental health challenges. Our compassionate team of psychiatric, medical and behavioral health professionals provides a nurturing and therapeutic experience along with a treatment plan tailored to meet each child's individual needs. The goal of our treatment programs is for each child to safely return home with the resources and supports in place to live a healthy and happy life in their community.

If you're concerned that a child in your care is struggling with DMDD or other mental health needs, **call KVC Hospitals at 913-890-7468.** We're available 24/7 to answer your questions.

Here's a list of additional resources you can contact for help:

- Call the child's primary care physician or your local community mental health center
- Text HOME to 741741 for 24/7 support from the Crisis Text Line
- Call the National Alliance on Mental Illness helpline at 800-950-6264, which is staffed by volunteers who have mental health conditions
- Visit the Anxiety & Depression Association of America website at adaa.org