

Disruptive Behavior Disorders in Children & Teens

Children argue, have tantrums, disagree with authority and display other challenging behaviors as a normal part of going through different developmental stages. However, these behaviors can become serious if they grow severe, are occurring frequently, and/or put their safety or the safety of others at risk.



Two Types of Disruptive Behavior Disorders:

Conduct Disorder:

A child with this disorder is often showing excessive aggression toward other people and significantly struggles with following rules. Their inability to follow rules may be so extreme that they are breaking laws and getting into serious legal trouble. These behavioral challenges make it difficult for them to maintain healthy relationships and their risky behavior may also result in physical and/or emotional injuries of themselves or others.

Symptoms & Examples of Behaviors:

- Bullying or being aggressive toward other people and/or cruelty to animals
- Risky behaviors such as substance misuse, excessive speeding in cars, skipping school, sneaking out of the house, or other serious violations of rules and safety
- Damaging personal or public property
- Frequently lying
- Stealing

Oppositional Defiant Disorder:

If a child is acting out frequently and it is causing problems throughout all aspects of their life—home life, school, friendships, etc.—then they may be struggling with this disorder. Typically, this disorder shows in adolescent children and is less common in teens. A child with this will often argue with or defy authority figures.

Symptoms & Examples of Behaviors:

- Often arguing with authority figures
- Doesn't follow rules well
- Often angry or having tantrums
- Easily irritated or they go out of their way to irritate others
- Inability to take responsibility for mistakes, blames others



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.
- **Encourage the child to exercise or do physical activities they enjoy.** Regular exercise can help with depression, promote better sleep, and reduce challenging behaviors.
- **Consider attending therapy sessions together to show them your commitment to their wellness.** Allow the child to express their feelings openly and honestly without judgment or shame.



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 Disruptive Behavior Disorders 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