



## DISRUPTIVE, IMPULSE–CONTROL, AND CONDUCT DISORDERS

### What it is:

Disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders are conditions involving problems in the self-control of behaviour and emotions. While there are other mental disorders that may also manifest with problems in the regulation of behaviour and emotions, these specific disorders are unique in that the behaviours exhibited in disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders violate the rights of others or bring the individual into conflict with authority figures or societal norms.

Disorders under this classification include oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, kleptomania, and pyromania. Although the behaviour exhibited in each disorder may vary, there are certain common traits, such as aggression, destruction of property, disregard for other peoples personal rights or property that are present in most of them. These disorders all tend to have onset in childhood or adolescence. Because many of the behaviours exhibited may be common in adolescents at some stage of development, it is important to look at factors such as frequency, persistence, and pervasiveness in comparison with the individual's age, gender and culture before making a diagnosis.

### Common general symptoms of disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders:

1. A pattern of angry/irritable mood
2. Argumentative/defiant behaviour
3. Verbal or physical aggression towards others
4. Bullying or threatening others
5. Initiating physical fights
6. Deliberately damaging property, for example by setting fires
7. Stealing objects that are not needed for personal use or for their monetary value
8. Recurring behaviour of rule defiance, for example running away from home, or skipping school



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### **Causes:**

There are a number of factors that could contribute to the development of disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders. Physical or sexual abuse, harsh discipline, parental neglect or rejection, frequent change of caregivers, parental criminality and a family history of substance related disorders are all risk factors. For certain disorders there may also be a hereditary link, as family history of similar disorders have shown to increase the risk of development. Neurobiological markers and abnormalities have also been found to present in certain of the disorders.

**Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.**

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:  
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*