

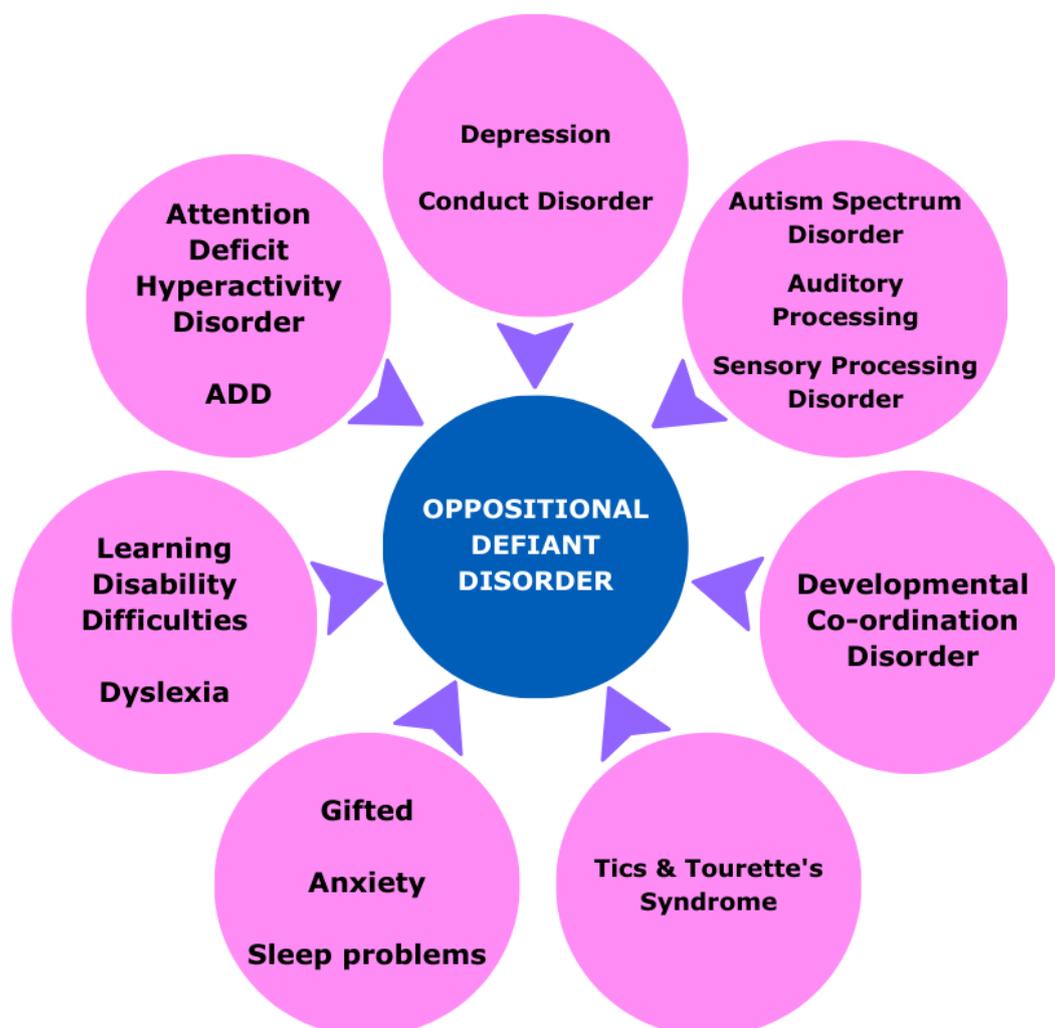
# OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (ODD)

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a condition that is commonly seen in up to 50% of children and young people with ADHD.

The child is stubborn, hostile and often:

- loses their temper and argues with adults
- defies or refuses to comply with instructions
- annoys people and blames others for his or her mistakes
- easily annoyed with themselves
- angry and resentful
- spiteful or vindictive

Management includes a behavioural approach by parents/carers who can learn additional strategies by attending group-based parenting programmes.



## What are the symptoms of ODD?

Sometimes it's difficult to recognise the difference between a strong-willed or emotional child and one with ODD. It's normal to exhibit oppositional behaviour at certain stages of a child's development.

Signs of ODD generally begin during preschool years. Sometimes ODD may develop later, but almost always before the early teen years. These behaviours cause significant impairment with family, social activities, school and work.

## Diagnosing ODD

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), lists criteria for diagnosing ODD. The DSM-5 criteria include emotional and behavioural symptoms that last at least six months. These include:

### Angry and irritable mood:

- Often and easily loses temper
- Is frequently touchy and easily annoyed by others
- Is often angry and resentful

### Argumentative and defiant behaviour:

- Often argues with adults or people in authority
- Often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
- Often deliberately annoys or upsets people
- Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehaviour

### Vindictiveness:

- Is often spiteful or vindictive
- Has shown spiteful or vindictive behaviour at least twice in the past six months

### ODD can vary in severity:

- **Mild.** Symptoms occur only in one setting, such as only at home, school, work or with peers.
- **Moderate.** Some symptoms occur in at least two settings.
- **Severe.** Some symptoms occur in three or more settings.

## Causes

There's no known clear cause of ODD. Contributing causes may be a combination of inherited and environmental factors, including:

- Genetics — a child's natural disposition or temperament and possibly neurobiological differences in the way nerves and the brain function
- Environment — problems with parenting that may involve a lack of supervision, inconsistent or harsh discipline, or abuse or neglect

## Risk factors

ODD is a complex problem. Possible risk factors for ODD include:

- Temperament — a child who has a temperament that includes difficulty regulating emotions, such as being highly emotionally reactive to situations or having trouble tolerating frustration

- Parenting issues — a child who experiences abuse or neglect, harsh or inconsistent discipline, or a lack of parental supervision
- Other family issues — a child who lives with parent or family discord or has a parent with a mental health or substance use disorder
- Environment — oppositional and defiant behaviours can be strengthened and reinforced through attention from peers and inconsistent discipline from other authority figures, such as teachers

## Complications

Children and teenagers with ODD may have trouble at home with parents and siblings, in school with teachers, and at work with supervisors and other authority figures. Children with ODD may struggle to make and keep friends and relationships.

### **ODD may lead to problems such as:**

- Poor school and work performance
- Antisocial behaviour
- Impulse control problems
- Substance use disorder
- Suicide

### **Many children and teens with ODD also have other mental health disorders, such as:**

- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Conduct disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Learning and communication disorders

Treating these other mental health disorders may help improve ODD symptoms. And it may be difficult to treat ODD if these other disorders are not evaluated and treated appropriately.

## Prevention

There's no guaranteed way to prevent ODD. However, positive parenting and early treatment can help improve behaviour and prevent the situation from getting worse. The earlier that ODD can be managed, the better.

Treatment can help restore child's self-esteem and rebuild a positive relationship between you and your child. Your child's relationships with other important adults in his or her life — such as teachers and care providers — also will benefit from early treatment.