

# Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD) was developed and added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) to more accurately help diagnose young kids with a mood disorder that did not truly fit the bi-polar Disorder criteria. Prior to developing a more pin-pointed disorder, many of the kids with DMDD either went undiagnosed because they did not fit the necessary criteria for bi-polar disorder or they were mis-diagnosed with bi-polar disorder or with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

DMDD is a mood disorder in which young kids and early teens have continual and extreme irritability, anger, and frequent temper outbursts.

Kids with DMDD are generally diagnosed between the ages of 6 and 10. To be diagnosed with DMDD, a child must have experienced symptoms continually for 12 or more months.

The symptoms of Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD) are much more than a kid having a bad day or being in a bad mood. Their symptoms are considered serious and severe.

## Signs and Symptoms of Kid with DMDD:

- Explosive and reoccurring anger outbursts multiple times throughout a week
  - Angry outbursts / periods of rage
  - Fits of aggression towards others or property
  - Behavioral problems in school or at home
  - Bouts of physical violence
  - Verbal aggression
- Frequently irritable/agitated throughout the day most every day
  - Extreme irritability
  - Anger
  - Fluctuating moods that are unpredictable
- Trouble functioning due to irritability in more than one place such as at home, school or in social situations like outside on the playground with other kids
  - Unable to self-regulate emotions
  - Unable to refocus attention

DMDD can disrupt and damage the life of a child, often interfering with their ability to learn. It may also put a strain on family relationships and interfere with the child's ability to develop normal and healthy friendships and peer relationships. They also may have a hard time in social settings or participating in activities such as team sports. If you think your child has DMDD, it is essential to seek a diagnosis and treatment.

Over time, as children grow and develop, the symptoms of DMDD may change. For example, an adolescent or young adult with DMDD may experience fewer tantrums, but may begin exhibiting symptoms of depression or anxiety. As a result, treatment may also change over time.

## Treatment for DMDD:

Psychotherapy/talk therapy is the main form of treatment. There are 2 types of therapy generally used.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)**
  - Helps to teach kids to boost their ability to handle frustration without having an outburst. It also helps teach coping skills for controlling anger and ways to recognize and address the distorted perceptions that contribute to outbursts.
- **Medication**

Medications are sometimes used to alleviate some of the symptoms associated with DMDD, however, there are no medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treating children or adolescents specifically with DMDD.

## Tips for Parents

- **Research and learn about the disorder.**
  - The more you know, the better equipped you will be at helping and supporting your child.
- **Talk to your child's teachers and therapist.**
  - Collectively, you can develop strategies, plans, and accommodations that can help your child at home and in school settings.
- **Take care of yourself and manage your stress.**
  - Take steps to manage and relieve the stress caused by DMDD

To learn more about DMDD or other mental health disorders, please view the links below or go the SCIP website at [www.scipnebraska.com](http://www.scipnebraska.com).

[childmind.org](http://childmind.org) › guide › major-depressive-disorder

[www.chop.edu](http://www.chop.edu) › conditions-diseases › major-depressio

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov) › health › topics › disruptive-mood...

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) › Bipolar Disorder