

CONDUCT DISORDER

Conduct Disorder is a pattern of negative behavior that strikes children and young adolescents. There is repeated and persistent behavior in which the youngster violates the right of others, or violates norms or rules appropriate to his or her age.

This behavior occurs in all aspects of the child's life. Physical aggression is common. This is seen as cruelty to other people or animals, and by vandalism. Stealing, lying and cheating are also common behaviors. Often a youngster with this disorder is truant from school, and may run away from home. Regular use of tobacco, liquor or drugs and early sexual activity also occurs with frequency. Self esteem is usually low, though the person may give the appearance of being "tough."

Children and adolescents with this disorder are often labeled as "bad" or "delinquents" instead of being viewed as ill. It is estimated that about 6-16 percent of males and 2-9 percent of females under the age of 18 have this disorder.

Signs of Conduct Disorder:

- *Stealing
- *Running away from home
- *Lying
- *Fire setting or other vandalism
- *Truant from school
- *Sexual misbehavior
- *Often initiates physical fights, at times using weapons
- *Run-ins with the law
- *Shows no remorse for negative behavior

Frequently, the child's "bad" behavior causes a negative reaction from others, which makes the child behave even worse. There are many reasons why a teenager may develop this kind of problem. Early professional help is important.

If you or someone you know is suffering from the signs of Conduct Disorder, call for help.

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