

## Treatment for oppositional defiant disorder

Early treatment is essential for people with ODD. Teens and adults with untreated ODD have increased risk for depression and substance abuse, according to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Treatment options can include:

**Individual cognitive behavioral therapy:** A psychologist will work with the child to improve:

- anger management skills
- communication skills
- impulse control
- problem-solving skills

They may also be able to identify potential contributing factors.

**Family therapy:** A psychologist will work with the whole family to make changes. This can help parents find support and learn strategies for handling their child's ODD.

**Parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT):** Therapists will coach the parents as they interact with their children. Parents can learn more effective parenting techniques.

**Peer groups:** The child can learn how to improve their social skills and relationships with other children.

**Medications:** These can help treat causes of ODD, such as depression or ADHD. However, there is no specific medication to treat ODD itself.

## Strategies to manage oppositional defiant disorder

Parents can help their children manage ODD by:

- increasing positive reinforcements and reducing negative reinforcements
- using consistent punishment for bad behavior
- using predictable and immediate parenting responses
- modeling positive interactions in the household
- reducing environmental or situational triggers (For example, if your child's disruptive behaviors seem to increase with a lack of sleep, make sure they get enough sleep.)

Adults with ODD can manage their disorder by:

- accepting responsibility for their actions and behaviors
- using mindfulness and deep breathing to keep their temper under control
- finding stress-relieving activities, such as exercise

## **Oppositional defiant disorder in the classroom**

Parents aren't the only ones who are challenged by children with ODD. Sometimes the child might behave for the parent but misbehave for teachers at school. Teachers can use the following strategies to help teach students with ODD:

- **Know that behavior modification techniques that work on other students may not work on this student. You may have to ask the parent what is most effective.**
- **Have clear expectations and rules. Post classroom rules in a visible place.**
- **Know that any change in the classroom setting, including a fire drill or the order of lessons, can be upsetting to a child with ODD.**
- **Hold the child accountable for their actions.**
- **Try to establish trust with the student by communicating clearly and being consistent.**