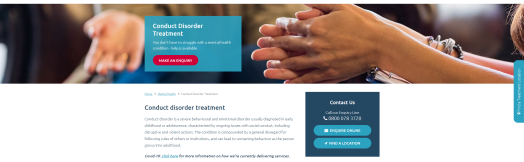

Conduct Disorder Treatment

You don't have to struggle with a mental health condition. Help is available.

MAKE AN ENQUIRY

Conduct disorder treatment

Conduct disorder is a severe behavioural and emotional disorder usually diagnosed in early childhood or adolescence, characterised by ongoing issues with conduct and rule-breaking disruptive and violent actions. The condition is compounded by a general disregard for following rules of others or institutions, and can lead to concerning behaviour by a person given into adulthood.

Consult Dr. Jack Joyce for more information on how we're currently delivering services.

The disorder develops through childhood and into adulthood, by which point the condition often becomes adult antisocial personality disorder. It is therefore very important that conduct disorder is addressed through professional medical treatment and support as soon as possible in a child's development to increase the likelihood of a positive outlook.

Treatment for conduct disorder at Priory uses a series of behavioural therapy therapy techniques to help your child challenge the negative thoughts and attitudes they feel with the condition. Our healthcare locations of Priory's hospitals and wellbeing centres as part of a nationwide network of specialist mental health treatment provides an opportunity to help your child improve their behaviour in social settings, as well as allowing our experts to find the best ways to communicate with them and help manage the disorder at home.

Contact Priory Today

You don't have to struggle with a mental health condition, expert assistance is available. Get the support you need today by calling us on: 0800 078 3728 or sending an enquiry from online.

Enquire Now

Does my child have conduct disorder?

If you believe your child may have conduct disorder, many people including their teachers, peers and family members may observe them as being poorly behaved, without realising they may have a mental health condition. The child will often appear confident and frustrated when interacting with others, although the mind set of your child with the disorder is actually one of insecurity, reacting in assurance to perceived intimidation or aggressive issues & them.

Children with conduct disorder will display signs of aggressive or violent behaviour as soon as they are physically able, including pushing, hitting or biting others due to not having the usual awareness of how their actions may emotionally or physically affect them. Into adolescence adolescence, the impact of the condition usually increases, with extreme bullying of others, hurting animals, regularly starting fights, theft and vandalism being a common behaviour.

This page was clinically reviewed by Dr Hector van Zwanenberg (MBBS, MMedSci, MRCPsych) in April 2022. Is scheduled to be reviewed again in April 2022. To view all Priory conduct disorder specialists, please click here.

Treatment for conduct disorder at Priory

When reviewing treatment for conduct disorder at Priory, factors such as the type of your child and severity of their symptoms will depend on what type of treatment they receive and for how long.

A combination of one-to-one counselling, talking therapy and family therapy with a focus on encouraging desired behaviours and managing conduct disorder in a home environment will usually be recommended for children. Therapy methods for older children and adolescents might also look at interactions with authority figures outside of the home and how they can better relate to their peers.

While it can take a long time to establish new thought and behaviour patterns and long-term treatment packages may be required, early treatment can reduce the severity of symptoms or even disrupt the progression of the disorder into adulthood.

Alongside treatment for conduct disorder with highly experienced therapists and consultants, advice and support for parents of children with conduct disorder can also be helpful. Encouraged desired emotional behaviours and rebuilt positive relationships both with yourselves as parents, and with their peers at primary or secondary school.

Some of the talking and behavioural therapies used to treat conduct disorder in young people at Priory include:

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

Particularly effective for helping your child manage thoughts, behaviours and mood more effectively, CBT uses an action-based and problem solving approach to root through negative attitudes associated with conduct disorder, with the aim of essentially 'rewiring' their ability to cope with anger, how they respond to others, and work towards alternative ways of directing and controlling their impulsive behaviours.

Family therapy

Family therapy works towards helping you as parents manage conduct disorder in your child and have to communicate in ways that help them cope with their symptoms. Helping forms a strong support system and encouraging positive behaviours, promoting understanding of the disorder and how you can also support a calm home reducing the impact of conduct therapy in terms of your child's distress and the overall family dynamic.

Psychotherapy

Your child can learn to express and control their anger in more socially appropriate ways through conversations with a highly trained therapist. Interacting conduct disorder in order to discuss how your child's attitude has been shaped, helping them learn techniques to manage anger or behaviours and impulses which can cause problems with their development and interaction with peers and adults.

While medication wouldn't usually be used in treating conduct disorder, if your child has symptoms of other mental health conditions such as ADHD or depression for example, or particularly distressing symptoms of the disorder, specific medications may be needed in order to ensure that treatment process for conduct disorder is more likely to be successful.

What is conduct disorder?

Conduct disorder refers to problems in behaviour and social conduct that usually begins during childhood or adolescence, with associated symptoms usually occurring by the time your child is 16. Young people diagnosed with the condition often display aggression towards others in a manner that isn't socially acceptable or has consideration for how their reactions may affect the physical and emotional state of other people.

When observed in young children, you may notice that they push, hit or bite other children their age, or even adults. They will blatantly show a general disregard for other people's physical and emotional boundaries, which worsens if not treated as they age, after which they may learn to hurting animals, regularly bully others, and even start fighting.

Due to conduct disorder often developing into antisocial personality disorder during adulthood, it is really important that should you suspect your child has the condition, they seek appropriate support and treatment at Priory's hospitals and wellbeing centres, where tailored treatment plans aimed at altering attitudes and behaviour associated can help reduce or even stop the impact on your child being able to live a happy and fulfilled life.

Difficulty following rules and behaving correctly can make it difficult for your child to fully integrate or benefit within a school environment, while destructive or deceitful behaviours can also make family life and maintaining the relationship between yourself as a parent and your child increasingly difficult.

Types of conduct disorder

As conduct disorder can refer to any group of troubling emotional and behavioural problems, the condition can be categorised into three types of the disorder, with each type diagnosed dependent on the age at which symptoms of conduct disorder become apparent.

Childhood conduct disorder

Is diagnosed when signs and symptoms of the condition have been shown before your child reaches the age of 10.

Adolescent conduct disorder

Is diagnosed when signs and symptoms of the condition have been shown during your child's teenage years.

Unspecified onset

conduct disorder is diagnosed where it isn't known at what age symptoms of the condition first appeared.

Signs and symptoms of conduct disorder

Depending on the age of your child when they are diagnosed with conduct disorder and the severity of the condition, the symptoms and behaviour they show can vary.

However, there are certain behaviours which are common in most young people with the condition, with a general disregard for the feelings of other people and a belief that they are correct in their acts of aggression towards other people remaining at the core of all types of conduct disorder.

Some of the most frequent symptoms and behaviours your child may display if they have conduct disorder include:

Aggressive behaviour

This is when your child causes physical harm to others, which may represent in younger children as pushing, biting or hitting, and older children and adolescents as bullying others or school, physically harming animals or older people, picking fights frequently and turning to crime.

Destructive behaviour

Intentional damage or destruction of someone else's property, which may include vandalism, arson, or purposely breaking objects in the home

Deceitful behaviour

More commonly present in older children and adolescents with conduct disorder, this can involve repeatedly lying or stealing from others after gaining their trust.

Breaking rules and orders

Frequently going against rules of society and institutions such as school or college, which can include causing pranks or others, missing school, or being sexually active at an age which is inappropriate.

The pleasure and gratification felt when your child behaves in an inappropriate way is what separates conduct disorder from more general behavioural issues. Displays of aggression and deceit are ways your child believes they can exert power over someone else, and can often be premeditated.

Because all adolescents will misbehave or have bouts of anger from time to time, it is important that you observe a pattern of behaviour in your child before they can be diagnosed with conduct disorder.

Spotting the signs and symptoms in younger children can be more difficult, but they will still display deceitful or destructive behaviour, where they may bully other children, or be bad at relations where there doesn't appear to be much of a motive.

Causes of conduct disorder

While the exact causes of conduct disorder isn't yet known, it is believed that there are several factors which may determine whether your child is likely to develop the disorder, including biological, genetic, social and environmental factors.

An important part of the assessment and treatment process if your child visits a Priory hospital or wellbeing centre will involve therapists determining whether negative behaviours associated with conduct disorder are due to learning behaviour within an abusive or troubled environment, or whether the 'gratification' aspect of the condition is to blame.

Some of the factors which may play a role in your child developing conduct disorder include:

Biological

Studies have shown that injuries to certain parts of the brain which control impulses and emotions may lead to problems in your child being able to regulate their behaviour.

It has also been found that children diagnosed with conduct disorder often have other mental illnesses, such as anxiety disorder, depression or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) which may be involved in worsening your child's symptoms.

Genetics

Many children and teens diagnosed with conduct disorder also have immediate family members with a history of mental illness, including anxiety disorders, substance use disorders and personality disorders, which may indicate that the likelihood of developing the condition is at least partly influenced by your child's genes.

Environmental

An unstable or abusive life at home may also contribute to the development of conduct disorder in your child, with traumatic experiences and close family members prone to substance abuse playing a role in developing poor learned behaviours similar to those seen in conduct disorder.

Social

If your child is part of a household with less income, have trouble being accepted by their friends at school, or experiences problems academically, these conditions may partially contribute to the behavioural issues seen in conduct disorder.

Get in Touch Today

For details of our Priory accessibility, you with assistance regarding mental health and wellbeing, please call 0800 078 3728 or click here to submit an enquiry form. For physicians looking to make a referral, please click here.

Contact Us

Call our Enquiry Line
0800 078 3728

ENQUIRE ONLINE

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Further Information

Specialist Vs Treatment

Payment and Funding Options

Outcomes

Safety, Quality & Compliance

Mental Health Help Guides

View All

Download Our Brochure

For more information about the mental health care at our Priory Hospitals, download our brochure.

Get our brochure

We treat conduct disorder at the following facilities