

# Difference Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder

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## Key Difference – Oppositional Defiance Disorder vs Conduct Disorder

Oppositional defiance disorder and conduct disorder are classified as disruptive behavioral disorders. Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is defined as a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior towards authority figures. Conduct disorder is defined as a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior where the individual repeatedly breaks social rules and carries out aggressive acts. These two conditions are similar in most of the aspects. But **the severity of the CD clinical features is much higher than in ODD**. This is the major difference between oppositional defiance disorder and conduct disorder.

## What is Oppositional Defiance Disorder?

Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is defined as a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior towards authority figures. This is one of the commonest psychiatric disorders in the childhood. Although most children do not progress to the advanced stage with severe psychiatric symptoms, it is important to keep an eye on the child's mental health status with the growth.

## Aetiology

- Genetics
- Unpleasant experiences in the early childhood such as negligence, abuse, poor parenting, etc.
- Environmental factors such as poverty and crime-stricken

## Diagnostic Criterion

A pattern of negativistic, defiant and disobedient behavior for at least 6 months including a minimum of 4 of the following oppositional behaviors.

- Often loses temper

- Often argues with adults
- Often refuses to comply with rules
- Deliberately annoys people
- Is easily annoyed and touchy
- Is angry and resentful
- Often spiteful and vindictive

### **Prognosis**

Once a diagnosis of ODD is established it remains stable throughout the childhood.



### **Management**

#### **General Measures**

- Psychoeducation

- Provision of education materials
- Treatment of comorbidities
- Reduce stressful circumstances
- School interventions

### **Psychological Treatments**

- Family therapy
- Anger management skills
- Parental management training course

### **Biological Treatment**

- Antipsychotics, lithium or carbamazepine can be used to control aggression
- SSRI is used to control comorbid mood disorder
- Stimulants are used to minimize the symptoms of ADHD

## **What is Conduct Disorder?**

Conduct disorder is defined as a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior where the individual repeatedly breaks social rules and carries out aggressive acts.

The Aetiology, clinical features, and management of CD are similar to those of ODD.



## Diagnostic criteria of CD

- A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior where the basic rights of others and social norms are violated.
- At least 3 of the following criteria should be present in the last 12 months, with at least 1 present in the last 6 months
- Aggression to people and animals
- Destruction of property
- Violation of rules
- The behavioral changes should cause clinically significant impairments in the occupational and social functioning of the patient
- In patients who are over 18 years of age, clinical features should not comply with those of antisocial personality disorder.

## What are the Similarities Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder?

- Both ODD and CD are associated with other comorbidities such as [ADHD](#), [PTSD](#), substance abuse, learning disabilities, [depression](#), and psychoses.
- The Aetiology, clinical features, and management of both conditions are the same.

## What is the Difference Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder?

### Oppositional Defiance Disorder vs Conduct Disorder

Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is defined as a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior towards authority figures.

Conduct disorder (CD) is defined as a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior where the individual repeatedly breaks social rules and carries out aggressive acts.

### Clinical Features

Clinical features are less severe.

Clinical features are more severe.

### Diagnosis

ODD is diagnosed based on the following criteria.

A pattern of negativistic, defiant and disobedient behavior for at least 6 months including a minimum of 4 of the following oppositional behaviors.

Often loses temper  
Often argues with adults  
Often refuses to comply with rules  
Deliberately annoys people  
Is easily annoyed and touchy  
Is angry and resentful  
Often spiteful and vindictive

Diagnostic criteria of CD are,

- A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior where the basic rights of others and social norms are violated.
- At least 3 of the following criteria should be present in the last 12 months, with at least 1 present in the last 6 months

Aggression to people and animals

Destruction of property

Violation of rules

- The behavioral changes should cause clinically significant impairments in the occupational and social functioning of the patient

- In patients who are over 18 years of age, clinical features should not comply with those of antisocial personality disorder.

## **Summary – Oppositional Defiance Disorder vs Conduct Disorder**

Oppositional defiance disorder (ODD) is defined as a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior towards authority figures. Conduct disorder is defined as a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior where the individual repeatedly breaks social rules and carries out aggressive acts. Although both ODD and CD have the same clinical features, the severity of them in CD is much higher than that in ODD. This is the difference between oppositional defiance disorder and conduct disorder.

### **References:**

1. Tasman, Allan, et al. *Psychiatry*. 4th ed., Chichester, John Wiley & Sons, 2015.

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**APA:** Difference Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder. (2017, November 02). Retrieved (date), from <http://differencebetween.com/difference-between-oppositional-defiance-disorder-and-vs-conduct-disorder/>

**MLA:** "Difference Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder" *Difference Between.Com*. 02 November 2017. Web.

**Chicago:** "Difference Between Oppositional Defiance Disorder and Conduct Disorder." *Difference Between.Com*. <http://differencebetween.com/difference-between-oppositional-defiance-disorder-and-vs-conduct-disorder/> accessed (accessed [date]).



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