

Symptoms of Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder

The defining characteristic of disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD) in children is a chronic, severe and persistent irritability. This irritability is often displayed by the child as a temper tantrum, or temper outburst, that occur frequently (3 or more times per week). When the child isn't having a temper outburst, they appear to be in a persistently irritable or angry mood, present most of the day, nearly every day. As the DSM-5 Fact Sheet says, "Far beyond temper tantrums, DMDD is characterized by severe and recurrent temper outbursts that are grossly out of proportion in intensity or duration to the situation."

This disorder, which was new to the DSM-5 in 2013, was created in an effort to replace the diagnosis of childhood bipolar disorder. The prevalence of this disorder is not yet known, but is expected to be within the 2 to 5 percent range for children.

The onset of symptoms must be before age 10, and a diagnosis should not be made for the first time before age 6 or after age 18.

Specific Symptoms of Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder

1. Severe recurrent temper outbursts manifested verbally (e.g., verbal rages) and/or behaviorally (e.g., physical aggression toward people or property) that are grossly out of proportion in intensity or duration to the situation or provocation.
2. The temper outbursts are inconsistent with developmental level (e.g., the child is older than you would expect to be having a temper tantrum).
3. The temper outbursts occur, on average, three or more times per week.
4. The mood between temper outbursts is persistently irritable or angry most of the day, nearly every day, and is observable by others (e.g., parents, teachers, friends).
5. The above criteria have been present for 1 year or more, without a relief period of longer than 3 months. The above criteria must also be present in two or more settings (e.g., at home and school), and are severe in at least one of these settings.
6. The diagnosis should not be made for the first time before age 6 years or after age 18. Age of onset of these symptoms must be before 10 years old.
7. There has never been a distinct period lasting more than 1 day during which the full symptom criteria, except duration, for a manic or hypomanic episode have been met.
8. The behaviors do not occur exclusively during an episode of major depressive disorder and are not better explained by another mental disorder.

As with all child mental disorders, the symptoms also cannot be attributable to the physiological effects of a substance or to another medical or neurological condition.

This diagnosis is new to the DSM-5. Code: 296.99 (F34.8)