

"Wild Child": Roadmap for Managing Children with Challenging Behaviors

- Consider **rating scales** to help clarify what *underlying* problems may be present, as well as to guide future treatment. Any specific problems could then be addressed specifically.
 - [PHQ-9](#) - for depression
 - [SCARED](#)(or [SCARED parent](#) for young kids) - for anxiety
 - [ACE/PEARLS checklist \(parent/caregiver\)](#) [ACE/PEARLS Teen \(self-report\)](#) - for possible trauma exposure
 - [Child PTSD Symptom Scale \(CPSS\)](#) (unless the ACE score is 'zero')
 - [Child Mania Rating Scale \(CMRS\)](#) (if there are wild mood swings and/or concern that the child has clinical depression and/or there is a family hx of bipolar disorder and/or considering prescribing an anti-depressant [as all of them could induce manic symptoms]). [CMRS scoring tips](#)
- For rating scales, scoring guides and other helpful tips please go to [WI CPCP website](#) and click on Screening Tools and Rating Scales.
- Referral for **psychotherapy**: It is likely that individual and family sessions will be necessary.
- Regarding **psychotropic medication**:
 - These may be considered to treat specific comorbid conditions (such as anxiety or depression).
 - For severe aggression resulting in danger towards self or others, psychiatric hospitalization and/or mood-stabilizing medication may be indicated.
 - Coach patient/caregivers that medication is not going to automatically 'make' a kid be more respectful/happy/agreeable and isn't going to prevent a kid from making outrageous threats to peers/teachers/etc.
 - The treatment for oppositional/conduct disorder symptoms (arguing, lying, blaming others, threats to harm others) is largely *behavioral*.
- If the current symptoms are causing problems in the school setting, the caregiver could request that the school develop an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** so that any needed accommodations can be put in place.
- Aggressive kids should not be exposed to **aggressive media** (movies, video games, etc.). (Actually, no kids should be exposed to this!)
 - More guidelines here:
 - [Media Violence | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics \(aap.org\)](#)
 - [Media, Kids, and Violence | National Center for Health Research \(center4research.org\)](#)