


PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS & CHILDREN/YOUTH

 **“Psychotropic medication”** refers to medications used to treat mental health & psychotic disorders.

 Common classes of psychotropic medication include **antidepressants, stimulants, & antipsychotics.**

 Conditions treated by psychotropic medications include **ADHD, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, & OCD.**

RED FLAGS

- **“Too Many”**: more than 3 medications; 2 or more drugs of same class or for same diagnosis
- **“Too Much”**: exceeds recommended dosage
- **“Too Young”**: child is under age 6
- **No concurrent services**, like therapy
- **Behavior is worsening** or not improving
- **Severe side effects** or problems with development
- **No monitoring and/or reevaluation** in past 6 months
- **Emergency administration** of meds outside treatment plan
- DSS seeks **blanket consent** for meds– court should **maintain jurisdiction** over med decisions

I NEED TO KNOW . . .

Why are the psychotropic medications prescribed?

- Child or youth’s relevant behaviors
- Child or youth’s diagnosis
- Non-medication interventions that have already been implemented, like therapy
- Types and results of recent and complete assessments and evaluations, including trauma-specific tools
- Possible benefits of medication

What are the risks?

- Potential side effects
- Impacts on development
- Effects of inconsistent use

What do the youth and parents want?

- How and when was informed consent obtained? Who consented?
- Child or youth and parents’ feelings about the meds
- Youth’s assent and agreement to take meds as prescribed
- No punishment for refusing to take meds

MORE INFORMATION ON THE BACK! 

I NEED TO KNOW . . .

What is the comprehensive treatment plan?

- Medications, dosage, schedule
- Caregiver is trained to administer meds
- Concurrent services, including therapy, have been set up
- Caregiver and provider know the plan for medication monitoring/follow-up
- Address barriers to taking medication
- Ensure continuous access to meds when child changes placements or providers

Are the medications and dosages still appropriate?

- Frequency and results of monitoring appointments, including side effects and developmental issues
- Results of recent reassessment or reevaluation
- Child/youth, family, caregiver, providers' opinions on effectiveness
- School's observation of behavior changes
- Seek minimal effective dose/number of meds
- Plans for stepping down or changing meds

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RESOURCES

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: GUIDE FOR USE AND MONITORING

Community Care of North Carolina

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ncpeds.org/resource/collection/715AED5E-6572-4109-AD5E-1F064520FD69/Guide_for_Use_and_Monitoring_of_Psychotropic_Medications.pdf

STILL HAVE CONCERNS?

ORDER A FORMAL MEDICATION REVIEW

Medication reviews are conducted by CCNC Pharmacists or the Community Pharmacy Enhanced Service Network:

<https://www.communitycarenc.org/what-we-do/supporting-primary-care/pharmacy>

Instructions for medication reviews:

BEST Practices for Medication Management for Children & Adolescents in Foster Care, Fostering Health NC/NCPEDS

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ncpeds.org/resource/collection/715AED5E-6572-4109-AD5E-1F064520FD69/BP_for_Medication_Management_July_2020.pdf

ORDER A WRITTEN REPORT EXPLAINING THE PRESCRIBER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

ORDER THE PRESCRIBER TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY