

DEPRESCRIBING ANTIDEPRESSANTS IN YOUTH

WHAT IS DEPRESCRIBING?

A structured approach to evaluating medications for indications, risks, and benefits with a goal of a minimum effective dose and number of medications.

STEP 1: PATIENT CONSIDERATIONS

Consider each of the following:

- Whether the child has responded to acute therapy and has been stable for 6 months to 1 year
- The severity and duration of the illness. Those with less severe symptoms and/or fewer episodes may be candidates
- Children who have comorbid anxiety symptoms may need additional time on medications
- The child is involved in therapy on a regular basis
- The current stress level facing the child and family
- Family/youth input

STEP 2: REVIEW MEDICATION HISTORY

Resources:

- [Medication History tool](#)
- [Antidepressants used in children](#)

STEP 3: ASSESS EACH MEDICATION

Consider:

- Level of evidence: some antidepressants have FDA approved indications for depression and anxiety in youth, they have more data on efficacy and safety
- Possible side effects: weight gain, GI distress, and/or sedation

STEP 4: DEPRESCRIBING

Steps to follow:

- In general, you can lower the dose by 25% each month to minimize risk of relapse, side effects, and withdrawal symptoms ([pages 34-35](#), [additional resource](#))
- Educate the youth and family on early signs of depression and anxiety
- For assistance, Norton providers can consult psych via Epic Secure Chat to NCMG Child Psychiatry and Psychology



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FOLLOW-UP

- Have the youth/family call or visit in 1 month to report progress
- Use standardized rating tools to monitor symptoms of anxiety and depression, such as [PHQ-9](#), [GAD-7](#) or [SCARED](#)
- Monitor for SSRI withdrawal symptoms ([resource](#))
- Encourage the youth/family to continue therapy

REFERENCES and SUPPORT

1. [2018 - 2019 Florida Best Practice Psychotherapeutic Medication Guidelines](#)
2. [MCAP Guidelines and Clinical Pearls](#) (Anxiety, Depression, and ADHD)
3. [Ohio Minds Matter](#)

For questions or more information, email: safemed@louisville.edu

or visit us online:

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