

Knowledge of psychopharmacology when working with individuals with personality disorder

Knowledge and skills required by the whole team providing pharmacological treatment for people with personality disorder

An ability to draw on knowledge of national guidance for treatment of personality disorder that includes recommendations on the role of medication and its safe and effective use (e.g. NICE or SIGN guidelines)
An ability to draw on knowledge of common concerns/controversies regarding the use of psychotropic medication for people with personality disorder while retaining a balanced view of the need to weigh-up benefits versus harms for the individual, both in the short and long term
An ability to refer to an appropriately qualified prescriber when medication may be indicated (for the symptoms of a personality disorder or a co-occurring disorder) or where there are concerns about a person's progress that relate to psychotropic medication(s) that are currently being prescribed
An ability to draw on knowledge of medications commonly prescribed in personality disorder, and the conditions for which they are employed
An ability to draw on knowledge that medications have benefits and harms including:
the likely benefits on symptomatology and personal functioning
the commonly experienced side effects such as weight gain, sedation, endocrine dysfunction and sexual dysfunction
the risks associated with medication(s) such as a possible increase in suicidal ideation in people taking anti-depressant medication and the development of dependence (e.g. with benzodiazepines)
the onset, duration and magnitude of any benefits, risks or side effects

Implementing knowledge of psychopharmacology when working with personality disorder

An ability for psychiatrists within a team to act as a resource to their colleagues (e.g. acting as sources of advice or consultation, or offering relevant training in psychopharmacology)

Working with clients

An ability to discuss with and signpost to, clients and, where appropriate, their families:
the potential benefits of medication(s) in their treatment programme
the potential side-effects of medication(s)
any concerns the client (or family) may have about medication(s) and provide advice or seek or refer on further advice
An ability to work collaboratively with the prescriber and client on the use of medication in personality disorder including being aware of:
the potential impact of the use of medication on the clients attitude to and experience of therapy
the client's understanding of the nature of their symptoms and interpersonal problems

An ability to support the client in managing their medication including:

reviewing and addressing any concerns the client has about the benefits or harms of the medication

an awareness of the impact of side effects on the implementation of any psychological intervention (e.g. weight gain in a socially anxious person)

supporting the client in interventions such as diet designed to counteract the effects of weight gain associated with medication

An ability to understand the attitude and expectations of the client in relation to medication, particularly the meaning they assign to medication

At times of crisis, an ability to support the client in the appropriate use of medication, and to:

minimise or avoid prescription (or changes to prescription) of medications in response to the crisis

ensure that any medication prescribed in response to the crisis is for short term use only