

TEN KEY PRINCIPLES

The following principles represent a condensation of the full Psychotropic Utilization Parameters for Children and Youth, but they are governed by and do not replace the full document. These are recommended to prescribers of all disciplines as well as to all persons involved in the psychiatric care of children and youth.

1. Perform a full diagnostic evaluation prior to the initiation of psychotropic medication except in the case of urgent or potentially dangerous symptoms.
2. Identify and recommend non-pharmacological treatments, including trauma informed and evidence based alternatives that are appropriate to the presenting target symptoms and diagnosis.
3. Identify target symptoms, rationale and risk/benefit ratio for each medication prior to initiation.
4. Obtain written informed consent from the legal guardian for children under fourteen years of age. Over the age of fourteen, obtain the consent from the patient, and then notify the guardian. Always engage children under 14 in the prescribing process as developmentally appropriate.
5. Monitor and document medication response and side effects during regular subsequent medication checks, including height, weight, blood pressure, pulse and lab tests as indicated.
6. Start with low doses and single medications except when contraindicated by acuity, and change one medication at a time at subsequent visits.
7. Consult with another qualified professional for adverse or inadequate medication response.
8. Periodically, but not less than every six months, re-evaluate the need for each medication in light of duration of treatment, therapeutic response, changing symptoms, side effect profile and developmental course.
9. Always consider the role of trauma and early adversity in the evaluation, diagnosis and management of patients.
10. Treat patients and caretakers of all ages with courtesy and respect, openly entertain healthy questions and discussion about treatment alternatives, and value yourself as a crucial member of the treatment team.