Since everyone is different, finding the right medication is a personal thing. Now that I’ve found the right combination for myself, my life has improved tremendously. Have your doctor try something else if your symptoms are still severe enough that they are affecting your life.

— DAVID K., artist, writer, floral designer, person in recovery
The Stress-Vulnerability Model of Mental Illnesses and Substance Use Disorders

Recovery Skills
- Pursuit of goals
- Knowledge of mental illness and substance use
- Healthy lifestyle
- A plan for staying well and preventing relapses

Coping Skills for stress and symptoms

Social Support

Stress

Biological Vulnerability

Mental Illness and relapse of symptoms

Substance Use Disorder and relapse of using alcohol or drugs

Medication

Skills for not using substances
Questions to get us started:

What do you know about the medications you are taking for your recovery?

What do you think about the medications you are taking?

What concerns do you have about the medications you are taking?

How do you talk to your prescriber about your experiences with medication?

We will cover **4 topics** in this Module:

**Topic 1:**
The Role of Medications

**Topic 2:**
Identifying and Responding to Medication Side Effects

**Topic 3:**
Talking to Your Prescriber

**Topic 4:**
Getting the Best Results from Your Medication

Reminder, set an **Agenda:**

**Here is the format of each Enhanced IMR session:**
1. Review the last session
2. Check in on
   - home practice
   - goals
   - substance use
   - symptoms
3. Learn information about a new topic
4. Summarize session and decide on home practice
Topic 1
The Role of Medications

Medications can be an important part of the recovery process. They often help ease the symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorders. They can also help prevent future relapse or hospitalization.

In this module, we will discuss medications that can help recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders. We will examine the medications you are taking so that you understand them better. We’ll also look at ways to identify and cope with side effects. Finally, we will use what you’ve learned to help you practice talking to your prescriber so you can get the best results from the medications you take.

People who choose to take medications often find that they:

- Have symptoms that are less intense or less frequent
- Achieve their goals with fewer setbacks
- Have fewer relapses or hospitalizations

This session will introduce four subjects to increase your understanding of the medications you take to support your recovery:

- Learning about your medications
- Names of medications: generic vs. name brand
- How medications are taken
- Talking to your prescriber to understand your medications

KEY POINT
Medications are an important tool in treating both mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Continued on next page...
Each of these subjects will be described in detail throughout this session. We encourage you to discuss these subjects with your E-IMR practitioner, or with other group members. Talking about subjects can improve your understanding and your confidence for using the information in your life.

Learning about your medications

There are many ways to learn about your medications:

- Read your pill bottle
- Ask your prescriber
- Talk to a pharmacist
- Look it up on a reliable website (such as Medline Plus)

Names of medications: generic vs. name brand

Medications often have several names. When they are first developed, they are given a name based on their chemical structure, which is then shortened to a generic name. Then, when the medication is sold to the public, it is given a brand name. This can be confusing because the same medication can have many different names.

Even more confusing, some medications can have similar names, but be used to treat very different illnesses. For example: Not many people would recognize the generic name “fluoxetine,” but its brand name, “Prozac” is widely known. And, while Prozac is widely recognized, it sounds a bit similar to “Prilosec,” which is a name brand drug used to treat entirely different types of health conditions.

Let’s Talk About It

What experience do you have with using medications to support your recovery?
What medications were helpful?
What medications were not helpful?
# Make It Your Own

## Medication List

List your medications below. What do you know about how they work? What would you like to learn about them? As you complete your list, discuss your answers with your E-IMR practitioner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medications I am taking</th>
<th>What do I know about this medication?</th>
<th>What would I like to know about this medication?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Make It Your Own

#### Classes of Medications

While there are thousands of different medications for mental health and substance use disorders, they all fit into five general classes. The list below presents the five general classes of medications, along with a brief description of their effects. Discuss the list with your E-IMR practitioner and note the benefits you experienced from the medication. The Appendix at the end of this module contains more detailed information about medications. We encourage you to check out the ones that apply to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Class</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Benefits I Experienced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antidepressant Medications</strong></td>
<td>Reduce the symptoms of depression:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low mood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concentration problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sleep problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appetite changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevent relapses of major depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce the symptoms of anxiety:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feeling nervous or tense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Severe worry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoiding situations causing anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sleep problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Obsessive-compulsive behaviors such as repeated checking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antianxiety and Sedative Medications</strong></td>
<td>Reduce the symptoms of anxiety:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Worry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nervousness and panic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Racing thoughts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Irritability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tension and restlessness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce problems associated with sleep:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Falling asleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Staying asleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued on next page*
### TOPIC 1 The Role of Medications

| **Mood Stabilizing Medications** | Reduce symptoms of mania:  
- Decreased need for sleep  
- Feeling “high” for no reason  
- Irritability  
- Unrealistic or “grandiose” plans or beliefs about oneself  
- Racing thoughts or rapid speech  
- Increased goal-directed behavior  
- Involvement in activities with high risk of negative consequences  
Prevent relapses of mania (or hypomania) |
| **Antipsychotic Medications** | Reduce symptoms of psychosis:  
- Hearing voices  
- Seeing or feeling things that aren’t there  
- Paranoia  
- Worrisome thoughts  
- Thinking problems  
Prevent relapses of psychosis or mania (or hypomania)  
Reduce symptoms of mania (see above) |
| **Substance Use Disorder Medications** | Reduce cravings for alcohol or drugs  
Prevent relapses of using substances |

**KEY POINT**
Medications can reduce symptoms, prevent relapses and hospitalizations, and help people make progress toward their recovery goals.
How medications are taken

Medications can be taken in different ways. Often, medications are available in more than one form.

- **Oral medication** is taken by swallowing it, such as a pill or a liquid.
- **Injection medication** is delivered with a syringe (by getting a shot).
- **Sublingual medication** is held under the tongue until it dissolves (such as a film or a pill).

**Long-acting medications** last for periods of time ranging from two weeks to several months. Several medications are available in a long-acting form. Taking medication in this way can be helpful for people who people to forget to take their medication, or who are reminded of something unpleasant when they take medication.

**Talking to your prescriber to understand your medications**

It can be difficult to talk to your prescriber about taking medication. Prescribers often don’t have much time to discuss things in an appointment, so it is up to you to make them aware of your needs. When your prescriber isn’t available, it can be helpful to talk to the nurse working with your prescriber.

Ask questions until you are confident that you know how to take your medications correctly. Combining medications with other substances can change how they work in your body. Certain combinations are dangerous. Make sure to ask about the effects of taking your medications with alcohol or drugs—or combining them with other medications, including those available over-the-counter.

**Let’s Talk About It**

What have you learned about the classes of medications?

Share the top 2 or 3 benefits you have gotten from your medications.

Which medications do you want to learn more about?
Try it Out

Talking To Your Prescriber To Understand Your Medication

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

**STEP 1**
Review the steps of the skill before you reach out to your prescriber, decide what is important to say. Then use the following steps:

▷ Explain why you would like to talk about your medication.

▷ Tell the prescriber which medications you want to talk about, how often you take them, and how they affect you.

▷ Ask the prescriber your questions (including “What is this medication for?” or “Does this medication interact with alcohol or drugs?”) or raise any concerns that you have about medication.

**STEP 2**
Watch a demonstration of the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

**STEP 3**
Review the demonstration: Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

**STEP 4**
Try it out: Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

**STEP 5**
Get feedback: After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

**STEP 6**
Continue practice and feedback: Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

**STEP 7**
Try it out on your own: Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.
Home Practice

The Role of Medications

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:** Using the Medication List you made in this session, research at least one of your medications. Use the Appendix in this module, or a website like Medline Plus.

**OPTION 2:** Make an appointment with your prescriber. Use the skills you tried out in this session to ask medication questions.

Make a plan for home practice this week:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I will do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With whom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

The step I will work on

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With whom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“You have to practice something to make it your own!”
KEY POINTS • Topic 1
The Role of Medications

Medications are an important tool in treating both mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Medications can reduce symptoms, prevent relapses and hospitalizations, and help people make progress toward their recovery goals.

Different medications treat different illnesses and can be taken in different ways.
Topic 2
Identifying and Responding to Medication Side Effects

In Topic 2, we’ll continue learning about medications. We’ll learn to identify possible side effects that are associated with psychiatric and substance use disorder medications. We’ll also learn what do to if you experience side effects, and how to talk to your doctor about them.

This session will introduce three subjects to increase your understanding of the medications you take to support your recovery:

- Identifying medication side effects
- What to do when you have a side effect
- Coping strategies for common side effects

Each of these subjects will be described in detail throughout this session. We encourage you to discuss these subjects with your E-IMR practitioner, or with other group members. Talking about these subjects can improve your understanding and your confidence for using the information in your life.

Identifying medication side effects

Your reaction to medications can vary depending on several different factors. You may have a few side effects, or no side effects—or you may have significant side effects compared to another person. Factors that may affect how you react to medication include:

- Weight
- Age
- Sex
- Metabolic rate
- Other medications you may be taking

KEY POINT
Different medications have different side effects.
## Make It Your Own

### Medication Side Effects

The table below describes common medication side effects. Discuss this list with your E-IMR practitioner and place an X next to side effects you have experienced. Also, write down what has helped you cope with side effects in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common side effect of medication</th>
<th>I had this side effect</th>
<th>What helped you cope with this side effect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drowsiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased appetite and weight gain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle stiffness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to the sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakiness or tremors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual side effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other side effects you have experienced:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What to do when you have a side effect

When you notice side effects, contact your prescriber. Don’t stop your medications until you consult with your prescriber. Try using the steps below when you experience side effects:

- Make a list of the side affects you are concerned about and contact your prescriber.

- Discuss your side effects with your prescriber including how often they happen, how they bother you, and what strategies you have tried.

- Try out the strategy or strategies suggested by your prescriber, which may include:
  - Waiting to let your body adjust to the medication
  - Trying a coping strategy to reduce discomfort or counteract the side effect
  - Changing the dose
  - Adding a medication to treat the side effect
  - Switching to a different medication

- Keep trying strategies and talking with your prescriber until you find something that works.
TOPIC 2 Identifying and Responding to Medication Side Effects

Try it Out

Talking To Your Prescriber About Side Effects

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1
Review the steps of the skill:

Make an appointment to talk to your prescriber about your medications. Then use the following steps:

▷ Identify a side effect you are concerned about.

▷ Tell the prescriber about the side effect including:
  - When it happens. How often it happens. How it bothers you.
  - What strategies you have used? How helpful have these strategies been?

▷ Ask your prescriber to help you address your concerns about the side effect.

▷ Come up with a plan.

▷ Thank your prescriber for his or her assistance.

STEP 2
Watch a demonstration of the skill: Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

STEP 3
Review the demonstration: Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

STEP 4
Try it out: Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

STEP 5
Get feedback: After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

STEP 6
Continue practice and feedback: Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

STEP 7
Try it out on your own: Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.
Coping strategies for common side effects

Sometimes your prescriber can help you reduce your side effects, but they may not be able to prevent them entirely. When this happens, it can be helpful to try other strategies to minimize the side effect’s impact on your life. The table below lists strategies for coping with common side effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side Effect</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drowsiness</td>
<td>Schedule a brief nap during the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get some mild outdoor exercise, such as walking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask your doctor about taking medication in the evening or at bedtime,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>instead of during the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drink water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased appetite and weight gain</td>
<td>Emphasize healthy foods in your diet, such as fruits, vegetables, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drink water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cut down on sodas, desserts, and fast foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eat smaller portions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercise regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go on a diet with a friend or join a weight-loss program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Find a vigorous activity that you enjoy, such as jogging, skating,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aerobics, sports, gardening, swimming, or bicycling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact your doctor if you are taking an antipsychotic medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle stiffness</td>
<td>Contact your doctor. This side effect should be addressed with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>medications and not tolerated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Try muscle stretching, stiffness exercises, yoga, or isometrics exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Get up slowly from a sitting or lying-down position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TOPIC 2  Identifying and Responding to Medication Side Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity to the sun</th>
<th>Stay in the shade, use sunscreen, and wear protective clothing. Avoid going out at the brightest time of day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakiness or tremors</td>
<td>Avoid filling cups and glasses to the brim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td>Chew sugarless gum, suck on sugarless hard candy, or take frequent sips of water. Ask your doctor or dentist about over-the-counter remedies for dry mouth, including special toothpastes, moisturizing sprays, and saliva substitutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Drink 6–8 glasses of water daily. Eat high-fiber foods such as bran cereals, whole-grain breads, fruits, and vegetables. Exercise daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual side effects</td>
<td>Talk to your doctor about strategies related to the particular problem you are experiencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Avoid caffeinated drinks late in the day. Get physical activity or exercise daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td>Eat smaller portions of food more frequently. Drink more water. Suck on sugarless hard candy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other side effects you have experienced:**

**KEY POINT**
There are many ways to cope with side effects.
Home Practice
Identify and Respond to Medication Side Effects

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:** Make an appointment to talk to your prescriber about side effects. Prepare by using the “Try it Out” session from this module.

**OPTION 2:** With input from your prescriber, try out a strategy for coping with side effects (such as avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day to help sleeplessness).

Make a plan for home practice this week:

What I will do

When

Where

With whom

Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

The step I will work on

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

When

Where

With whom
Different medications have different side effects.

There are many ways to cope with side effects.

Drowsiness
Increased appetite and weight gain
Restlessness
Muscle stiffness
Dizziness
Sensitivity to the sun
Shakiness or tremors
Dry mouth
Constipation
Sexual side effects
Trouble sleeping
Nausea
Other side effects you have experienced
Topic 3
Talking to Your Prescriber

Being able to communicate with your prescriber is very important when you are making decisions about your medication. Doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants may prescribe medications. These care providers are experts, and they are experienced in helping people find effective medications.

Earlier in this module, we discussed talking to your doctor to understand your medications and address side effects. This session will introduce four more important subjects to help you talk to your prescriber:

- Evaluating the benefits (pros) and possible drawbacks (cons) of taking medications
- Choosing subjects to discuss with your prescriber
- Understanding interactions between medications and substance use
- Preparing to talk to your prescriber

Evaluating the benefits (pros) and possible drawbacks (cons) of taking medications

Once you understand what your medications are for and how to use them correctly, it can be helpful to talk to your prescriber about the benefits they provide—or what their drawbacks may be. Weighing the pros and cons of a medication can help you make an informed decision about its use.

Let's Talk About It

Which medication benefits are important to help you achieve your goals?

Are there drawbacks of taking medication that are important to you? What are they?

What else would you like to ask your prescriber?
# Make It Your Own

## Pros And Cons Of Taking Medication

Use the chart below to record information you know about your medication, and to add information that you learn from talking to your prescriber. Check out the example and then generate your own ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros of taking medication</th>
<th>Cons of taking medication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Preventing relapse of symptoms</td>
<td>Example: Drowsiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## KEY POINT

Medications can have both pros and cons. It is important to talk about both of these with your practitioner and your prescriber.
Choosing topics to discuss with your prescriber

One of the best ways to work with your prescriber is to be actively involved. You can ask as many questions as needed to learn as much information as you can about your medications. You can ask about taking medications, switching medications, or any other questions you have. Consider the examples below:

- How will this medication benefit me? What will it help me with?
- How long does it take the medication to work? How long before I feel benefits from this medication?
- What side effects might I experience from this medication? Are there side effects if I use this medication long-term?
- What can I do if I have side effects?
- Other questions you may have:

Understanding interactions between medications and substance use

Some medications are dangerous to take when you are using alcohol or drugs. One example is drinking alcohol while taking benzodiazepines like Xanax. This is dangerous because both the medication and alcohol slow down your central nervous system functioning. In extreme cases, it can cause your heart to stop beating. In many cases, it is not dangerous to take medications while using alcohol or drugs and prescribers recommend that you continue to take your medications. It is important to know if your medications have dangerous interactions with alcohol or drugs.

Let’s Talk About It

What do you know about interactions between drugs and alcohol and your medications?

What do you think you should do if you are taking a medication that interacts with alcohol or drugs?
Make It Your Own

Preparing to talk to your prescriber

It can be helpful to identify questions you’d like to ask your prescriber and prepare them to ask in your next appointment with him or her. You can begin by making a list of questions and then practicing the conversation with your E-IMR practitioner.

Take a moment to write down questions you would like to ask your prescriber. Discuss them with your E-IMR practitioner as you go.

Questions I would like to ask my prescriber:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Try it Out

Asking Your Prescriber Questions About Your Medication

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

STEP 1

Review the steps of the skill: Make an appointment to talk to your prescriber about your medications. Then use the following steps:

▷ Ask your prescriber your list of questions.
▷ Ask the prescriber to help you address your questions.
▷ Thank the prescriber for his or her assistance.
TOPIC 3  Talking to Your Prescriber

**STEP 2**
Watch a demonstration of the skill: Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

**STEP 3**
Review the demonstration: Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

**STEP 4**
Try it out: Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

**STEP 5**
Get feedback: After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

**STEP 6**
Continue practice and feedback: Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

**STEP 7**
Try it out on your own: Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.
Home Practice

Talking to Your Prescriber

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:**
Make an appointment with your prescriber to ask questions about taking medication. Practice with someone ahead of time to increase your confidence.

**OPTION 2:**
Identify a medication that has helped you. List the benefits and drawbacks someone considering that medication should know. Design an advertisement that shows both the benefits and drawbacks.

Make a plan for home practice this week:

- What I will do
- When
- Where
- With whom

Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week? To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

- When
- Where
- With whom
Key Points • Topic 3
Talking to Your Prescriber

Medications can have both pros and cons. It is important to talk about both of these with your practitioner and your prescriber.

Your prescriber wants to know about your experiences with medications and wants to answer your questions.
Topic 4
Getting the Best Results from Your Medication

There are many things involved in getting the most benefit from your medication and reducing the drawbacks. It can take a long time for people to find what works best, so don’t get discouraged if you don’t figure it out right away. Topic 4 will discuss strategies you can use to maximize the benefits of your medication—including how to simplify your medication routine and how to remember to take your medications.

This session will introduce three important subjects to help you get the best results from your medication:

- Simplifying your medication routine
- Remembering to take your medication
- Strategies for getting the best results from your medication

Simplifying your medication routine

If you are taking medication several times a day, it can make it more difficult to keep track of all of your doses. Consider talking to your prescriber about simplifying your medication routine—such as by taking all your medications at the same time in the evening.

As mentioned in Topic 1, some medications are available in a long-acting form. There are several benefits of taking a long-lasting injectable medication, including not having to remember daily doses and feeling better results because the medication is provided at a steady level in the bloodstream.

If you are considering talking to your prescriber about simplifying your medication routine, it can be helpful to make a list of the challenges your current medication routine presents. You can also use this list to practice talking to your prescriber before your appointment.
Try it Out

Talking To Your Prescriber About Simplifying Your Medication Routine

Practicing can make you feel more confident, and it can help you be more effective in your life.

**STEP 1**
Review the steps of the skill: Before you talk to your prescriber, identify questions that you would like to ask about simplifying your medication routine.

Then use the following steps:

▷ Make a plan to ask the prescriber your questions.
▷ Ask the prescriber to help you address your questions.
▷ Thank the prescriber for his or her assistance.

**STEP 2**
Watch a demonstration of the skill: Your E-IMR practitioner will demonstrate how to use the steps of this skill.

**STEP 3**
Review the demonstration
Your E-IMR practitioner will ask for feedback about the demonstration. The practitioner will ask questions like: Did I follow the steps? How effective do you think I was?

**STEP 4**
Try it out: Now is your chance to try out the skill. Describe with whom, when, and where you would use the skill. Your E-IMR practitioner will play the part of the other person.

**STEP 5**
Get feedback: After you try it out, your E-IMR practitioner will guide a discussion about: what you did well, how effective your performance was, and (possibly) how you could do it even better.

**STEP 6**
Continue practice and feedback: Your E-IMR practitioner will help set up more situations to try it out if needed. After each practice, your practitioner will guide a review.

**STEP 7**
Try it out on your own: Plan with whom, when, and where you could practice this skill on your own.

**KEY POINT**
It is important to take medication regularly for it to work well and benefit you most.
Remembering to take your medication

Remembering to take your medication can be difficult. However, there are strategies that you can use to make taking medication part of your daily routine. Once you have talked to your prescriber about simplifying your medication schedule, consider trying these strategies:

- Pair taking medication with part of your daily routine (such as brushing your teeth)
- Use cues and reminders (such as storing your toothbrush near your pill containers)
- Use pill organizers
- Keep the benefits in mind (consider posting a list of benefits)

**KEY POINT**

Fitting medications into your routine can be help you remember to take them.

Using cues and reminders (behavioral tailoring)

There are different ways to help you change your behavior so that you can remember to take your medication. Here are some examples:

- Take medication at the same time every day. (This also helps keep a steady level of medication in your bloodstream.)
- Take medication at the same time as another daily activity such as brushing your teeth, showering, drinking coffee, eating breakfast, or getting ready for work.
- Use a calendar.
- Post a note to yourself.
- Keep the pill bottle next to an item in your daily routine, such as your coffee cup.
- Ask a supportive person or family member to help you remember.
- Set an alarm on your cell phone.
Using pill organizers

A pillbox organizes medication into daily doses. This allows you to see which medications you are supposed to take each day, and gives you a good way of seeing whether or not you’ve taken a dose. Many people find it helpful to keep track of their medications using a pillbox.

Posting a list of benefits

Many people find it helpful to remind themselves of the reasons that they are taking medication. Consider posting the list of medication benefits you made in Topic 3 where you will see it regularly.
## Make It Your Own

### Strategies for Getting the Best Results from Your Medication

The table below contains a list of strategies that can help you get the best results from your medication. As you read the list, discuss it with your E-IMR practitioner, and place an X next to any strategies you use, or would like to use. Also, note how you plan to use any new strategies you select.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>I have used this strategy</th>
<th>I would like to try this strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your prescriber to simplify your medication routine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switch to long-acting injectable forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take medication at the same time every day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take medication at the same time as another daily activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a cue or reminder (calendar, note, reminder, support person)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a pill organizer</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Remind yourself of the benefits of taking medication</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Make It Your Own

Using a Medication Strategy

Identifying and planning how to use a specific medication strategy can help you get the best results from your medication. You can practice setting up your strategy with your E-IMR practitioner, or other group members so you are prepared when you use the strategy at home. Use the following steps to help you practice the skill.

Identify a strategy that you would like to use from the Strategies for Getting the Best Results from Your Medication chart.

___________________________________________________________________

Make a plan to put the strategy into action. For example, if you want to try using a pill organizer, where might you purchase it? Who could help you organize the medication in your organizer? If you are setting up an alarm on your cell phone, how can you test it out to make sure it’s loud enough for you to hear?

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Practice an element of the plan with your E-IMR practitioner or someone you trust. For example, practice what you would like to say to your prescriber, or set up your cell phone reminder and test it out, or start a list of medication benefits and decide where you can post it so you will see it. Make a note about how and when you will practice:

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________
“TAKING MEDICATIONS is an important part of my recovery. Before medications, my life was hell. I was constantly distracted by voices in my head, and thinking the TV or radio were talking to me. I often drank or smoked pot to deal with the voices and paranoia. Even after I started using medication, I still resisted it—I didn’t think I needed meds, so I’d stop taking them. Then I’d have a relapse, and sometimes a hospitalization. Eventually, I decided that medication was an important tool for being able to live my life.

I have friends with the same diagnosis as me who don’t take medication. They don’t like the side effects or how it makes them feel, but they also have more problems with symptoms and relapses. Everyone has the right to make their own choice about whether or not to take medication. For me, without medication, my voices were so loud they took over everything else, and I couldn’t accomplish anything. I worked with my psychiatrist to find the best medication with the fewest side effects possible, and I’m happy with what we’ve chosen. Now that I don’t hear voices or have delusions, I’m no longer interested in drinking or getting high. I’m free to work on my goals and live my life.”

— David
Home Practice
Getting the Best Results from Your Medications

Choose one of the following options to practice or make one up.

**OPTION 1:**
Use a strategy for taking medication such as talking to your prescriber about simplifying your medication routine using a pillbox, or creating a reminder.

**OPTION 2:**
Create a small card to you carry with you that lists medication benefits. Keep the card in a place you can easily find it, such as your wallet, purse, or nightstand.

Make a plan for home practice this week:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I will do</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With whom</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

Goal Tracking

Looking at your goal tracking sheet, which step will you work on this week?

To complete this step, I will use the following plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key Points • Topic 4

Getting the Best Results from Your Medication

It is important to take medication regularly for it to work well and benefit you most.

Fitting medications into your routine can help you remember to take them.

It sometimes takes patience and time to find the right medications. With the help of supportive people in your life, you can get the best results from your medication.
After depression symptoms have been reduced or are no longer present, antidepressant medications can prevent relapses of depression and hospitalization.

Some people take antidepressants for short periods of time to ease symptoms of depression. Others, who have many episodes of depression, find that taking medication over the long-term is more helpful. People do not have to take larger amounts of antidepressant medication over time to get the same benefits. Thus, these medications are not addictive.

### Depression

Antidepressants can reduce symptoms of depression, including:

- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Low-energy or agitation
- Loss of pleasure and interest in things
- Difficulty starting and following through on activities
- Changes in appetite and weight
- Concentration problems
- Sleep problems
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Decrease in self-care

### Anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other disorders

Antidepressant medications are also effective for the treatment of other disorders, including anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain conditions, or to assist with smoking cessation.

Some antidepressants can reduce anxiety. These are effective in the treatment of anxiety disorders, such as:

- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Panic disorder
- Social anxiety disorder
Types of antidepressants and how they work

Antidepressants work by changing the availability and balance of chemicals in the brain that are called neurotransmitters. Different medications re-balance chemicals in the brain in different ways. They also have effects in other parts of the body, called side effects. Although different types of antidepressants have different side effects, they seem to have a similar overall impact on depression. Therefore, people usually choose antidepressants based on avoiding the side effects that would be the biggest problem for them.

There are several types of antidepressants. The most well-known antidepressants are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). These work by increasing the availability of the neurotransmitter called serotonin. Another group of antidepressants affects a neurotransmitter called norepinephrine, along with serotonin. These are called serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs). Another type of antidepressant alters serotonin and norepinephrine levels in a different way than SNRIs do. Other types alter another neurotransmitter called dopamine. Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) work by inhibiting the production of an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters in the brain.

Common side effects of antidepressants

- Nausea
- Increased appetite/weight gain
- Reduced sexual interest or function
- Fatigue/drowsiness
- Insomnia

When to call your doctor right away:
Sometimes, people can have serious side effects from antidepressants that require immediate treatment. Call your prescriber right away if you experience an irregular heartbeat, or if your side effects become too difficult to manage. It is important to keep taking your medication until after you speak to your prescriber. Discontinuing these medications suddenly can lead to additional discomfort or return of symptoms. Talk with your doctor to help identify the best options for your specific needs.
## Antidepressant medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Generic Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anafranil</td>
<td>clomipramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celexa</td>
<td>citalopram hydrobromide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cymbalta</td>
<td>duloxetine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desyrel</td>
<td>trazodone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effexor</td>
<td>venlafaxine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elavil</td>
<td>amitriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emsam</td>
<td>selegiline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexapro</td>
<td>escitalopram oxalate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludiomil</td>
<td>maprotiline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luvox</td>
<td>fluvoxamine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marplan</td>
<td>isocarboxazid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nardil</td>
<td>phenelzine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norpramin</td>
<td>desipramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamelor, Aventyl</td>
<td>nortriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paxil</td>
<td>paroxetine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prozac</td>
<td>fluoxetine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serzone</td>
<td>nefazadone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinequan, Adapin</td>
<td>doxepin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofranil</td>
<td>imipramine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivactil</td>
<td>protriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbutrin</td>
<td>bupropion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoloft</td>
<td>sertraline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrid</td>
<td>vortioxetine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trintillex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix – Part 2
Substance Use Disorder Medications

There are several different medications used to treat substance use disorders, and they work in different ways. Some of these medications can ease the effects of withdrawal, some reduce cravings to help people reduce their substance use and quit, and others are meant to prevent relapse. The medications listed below are grouped into three categories: aversion, craving reduction, and replacement therapies. While some common side effects have been included, they vary widely, even between drugs in the same category. It is always best to ask your prescriber about the side effects of specific medications.

Types of substance use disorder medications

- **Aversion medications** give the user an unpleasant reaction to a substance, meant to counteract the typical pleasure one experiences when using it. This helps discourage cravings. The most commonly used medication in this category is Antabuse.

  *Common side effects include:* sleep problems, metallic taste in mouth, numbness in hands or feet, slowed thinking, and impaired memory.

- **Craving reduction medications** typically act on the neurotransmitters in the brain to lessen the cravings a person has for drugs or alcohol, and to help them control the urge to use the substance. Topamax is an example of a medication that works by reducing craving.

  *Common side effects include:* nausea, sleep problems, breathing problems, slowed thinking, sedation, and diarrhea.

- **Replacement medications** act on the same parts of the brain as the substance being replaced. These medications often work by eliminating the cravings for the substance and/or preventing the substance from having an effect once it is ingested. Methadone is an example of a replacement medication that has been used to successfully treat opioid use disorder for decades and Suboxone is a newer replacement medication.

  *Common side effects include:* nervousness, sleep problems, weakness, drowsiness, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, loss of appetite, and sex related problems.
When to call your doctor right away: Trouble breathing, confusion, chest pain, dizziness, fainting, or fast heartbeat should be addressed with medical care right away. Questions about taking these medications should always be discussed with your prescriber. If your side effects become too difficult to manage, it is important to keep taking your medication until after you speak to your prescriber. Discontinuing these medications suddenly can lead to additional discomfort.

### Substance use disorder medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand name</th>
<th>Generic name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revia</td>
<td>Naltrexone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disulfiram</td>
<td>Antabuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topamax</td>
<td>Topiramate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kemstro, Gablofen, Lioresal</td>
<td>Baclofen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campral</td>
<td>Acamprosate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suboxone, Subutex</td>
<td>Buprenorphine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadose, Diskets, Dolophine</td>
<td>Methadone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix – Part 3
Mood Stabilizers

Mood stabilizers are medications prescribed primarily to reduce mood swings between mania and depression in bipolar disorder. Symptoms of depression are described in Part 1 of this Appendix. Common symptoms of mania include:

- Decreased need for sleep
- Feeling euphoria (“high” for no reason)
- Irritability
- Unrealistic or “grandiose” plans or beliefs about oneself
- Racing thoughts or rapid speech
- Increased goal-directed behavior
- Involvement in activities with high risk of negative consequences

After a person is no longer experiencing mania symptoms, mood-stabilizing medications can prevent relapses of symptoms, and hospitalizations. Most mood stabilizers are effective in managing manic symptoms, while others are effective for managing both mania and depression.

Types of mood stabilizers

The first mood stabilizer discovered was lithium. Another class of drugs, called anticonvulsants, has also been effective in reducing mood swings associated with bipolar disorder. Anticonvulsant medications were first discovered for the treatment of seizures— and they continue to carry the name. Antipsychotic medications are also effective at reducing manic symptoms and preventing relapses of mania. Lithium and another drug called clozapine are specifically helpful in reducing suicidal ideation and behavior.

Common side effects of mood stabilizers

**Lithium**

- Drowsiness
- Dry mouth, increased thirst, urination
- Hand tremors
- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomach pain
- Changes in skin or hair
- Cold feelings or discoloration in fingers or toes
- Feeling uneasy
- Loss of interest in sex, impotence
- Kidney damage
- Thyroid suppression
Anticonvulsants
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness, fatigue
- Nausea
- Rash
- Tremors
- Weight gain

Antipsychotics
- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth
- Drowsiness
- Muscle spasms or tremors
- Weight gain

It is important to note that some drugs and some side effects may require special monitoring. For example, your doctor may test your blood to determine the amount of medication in your bloodstream, or may monitor your heartbeat using special equipment.

When to call your doctor right away:
Trouble breathing, swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat, hives, a rash, fever, or swollen glands, sores on the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, genitals, and eyelids, confusion, and slurred speech are all conditions that require immediate medical attention. If your side effects become too difficult to manage, it is important to keep taking your medication until after you speak to your prescriber. Discontinuing these medications suddenly can lead to life threatening withdrawal symptoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood stabilizing medications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eskalith, Lithobid</td>
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<td>Tegretol</td>
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<td>Depakote, Depakene</td>
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<td>Lamictal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seroquel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latuda</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Antipsychotic medications are effective at reducing symptoms of psychosis that can occur in many different psychiatric disorders, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression. In addition, these medications can be effective at preventing relapses of psychotic symptoms and hospitalization. Common symptoms treated by antipsychotics include:

- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing something that isn’t there)
- Delusions (unrealistic beliefs)
- Thought disorder
- Mania
- Extreme mood swings

### Types of antipsychotic medications

There are two broad types of antipsychotic medications, referred to as first-generation medications and second-generation medications. Second-generation antipsychotic medications are also known to be effective mood stabilizers. The second-generation antipsychotics have been used more frequently in recent years because they are less likely to cause movement disorder side effects than the first-generation medications.

Both types of medications are believed to work by making changes in the brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that regulate thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors.

### Common side effects of antipsychotic medications

- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth
- Drowsiness
- Muscle spasms or tremors
- Weight gain
- Movement disorders (only with first generation antipsychotics)
- Sexual side effects
Clozapine is a second-generation antipsychotic medication usually used to help people who haven’t had success controlling symptoms using other medications. It is somewhat different from other second-generation medications and does require frequent monitoring by a physician using blood samples. However, there is some evidence that it helps with substance abuse, aggression, and suicidality.

**Common side effects of clozapine**

- Weight gain
- Tremor, dizziness, spinning sensation
- Headache, drowsiness
- Nausea, constipation
- Dry mouth, or increased salivation
- Blurred vision
- Fast heart rate, increased sweating
- Low levels of white blood cells (rare)

**When to call your doctor right away:**
These medications can affect your heart and you should contact your prescriber if you experience irregular heartbeat, or if you have any concerns about your heart or blood vessels. Agranulocytopenia (low levels of white blood cells) is a rare, but serious condition. If you experience high fever, chills, exhaustion or weakness, or mouth sores, it is essential to obtain medical care as soon as possible.

### Antipsychotic medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand name</th>
<th>Generic name</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abilify, Maintenna, Aristada</td>
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<td>Clozaril, Fazaclio</td>
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<td>Geodon, Zeldox</td>
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Appendix – Part 5

Antianxiety and Sedative Medications

Antianxiety medications reduce the intensity of anxiety or stimulation that people feel. Sedative medications are used to help people sleep, and to assist in treating sleep disorders. Some medications discussed in this fact sheet are used to address both conditions, while others are specific only to anxiety, or sleep.

In comparison to most other classes of psychiatric medications, these medications have rapid effects, and they also wear off quickly. Also in contrast to other medications, antianxiety medications can lead to physical dependence and can be addictive. Caution should be used when taking these medications, and their use should be carefully monitored with the help of a prescriber.

Types of antianxiety and sedative medications

Benzodiazepines are commonly used for decreasing anxiety and promoting sleep. They are also used to reduce the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal, and to treat muscle spasms. These medications work by indirectly slowing brain activity through areas that use the brain chemical (neurotransmitter) called GABA. There are differences between specific benzodiazepine medications in how quickly they act, and how long their effects last. Your prescriber can share more information about the differences between benzodiazepines.

Other medications help with sleep, but have no effects on anxiety. These medications include the popular sleep medication Ambien (zolpidem), along with hypnotics and medications affecting the neurotransmitter GABA. Antihistamines, which were originally designed to treat allergies, are sedating and are sometimes used to help sleep. Medications which contain or mimic melatonin, a neurotransmitter related to sleep, are available both over-the-counter and by prescription. Consultation with a prescriber or pharmacist is highly recommended when taking over-the-counter supplements.
Common side effects of antianxiety and sedative medications

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Poor balance or coordination
- Slurred speech
- Trouble concentrating
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Stomach upset
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Increased risk for dementia

When to call your doctor right away:
Mixing these medications with alcohol, painkillers, or other antianxiety or sleeping medications can heighten their effects in a dangerous way by slowing down breathing and heart rates. Questions about taking these medications should always be discussed with your prescriber. If your side effects become too difficult to manage, it is important to keep taking your medication until after you speak to your prescriber. Discontinuing these medications suddenly can lead to life threatening withdrawal symptoms. If you are concerned that you or someone else needs medical attention because of mixing medications or overdose, you should go immediately and directly to a hospital emergency department.

### Antianxiety and sedative medications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Generic Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ativan</td>
<td>lorazepam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benadryl</td>
<td>diphenhydramine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buspar</td>
<td>buspirone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centrax</td>
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<td>Dalmane</td>
<td>flurazepam</td>
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<td>Halcion</td>
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<td>alprazolam</td>
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<td>hydroxyzine</td>
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<td>Ambien</td>
<td>zolpidem</td>
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<tr>
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<td>melatonin</td>
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<tr>
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<td>zaleplon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silenor</td>
<td>doxepine</td>
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