



The Journey to Use Meds Optimally to Support Recovery

May 13, 2021

Patricia E. Deegan PhD

pat@patdeegan.com



Optimal Use of Meds to Support Recovery



Imagine: Using Meds is a Journey

Shift focus from getting people to take meds, to supporting people through the challenges of using meds optimally to get the life they want





Meds Helpful?

Passivity

Trade-Offs

Self-Medicating

Motivation

Implicit Racial Bias

Med Fatigue

Exploration

Optimal Use

Redefining Self

Self-report



My Concerns About Meds

Sometimes we have concerns about the meds we are prescribed. Use this worksheet to let your doctor and team know what, if any, concerns you have. Your team wants to support you in finding the treatment that's right for you. Read each question below, and choose your answer:

1. In addition to meds, are there any other things you are doing to help yourself?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
2. Do you feel motivated to use the meds?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
3. Are you concerned about side effects?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
4. Are the meds helping you?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
5. Are you thinking about stopping or lowering your meds?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
6. Are you concerned about how the meds are affecting your health?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
7. Are meds changing you in any ways you don't like?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
8. Are you using drugs or alcohol instead of, or in addition to, the meds?
 Yes
 No
 Prefer not to answer
9. Are you exploring other wellness or cultural healing strategies?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
10. Are you tired of taking meds?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
11. Do you have beliefs that interfere with taking medicine?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
12. Are you concerned about being racially profiled by a white mental health professional?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure
13. Do you have concerns about paying for the meds or getting to the store to pick them up?
 Yes
 No
 Unsure

Two people who
are med
adherent





Bill

Looking back, I had to find a reason to control my mood. At first, I didn't mind being in the hospital. There are nice people there too. About a year later I crashed my car. It didn't bother me that much, but it really bothered my family. I hated to see them worry about me. That motivated me a little to control my moods. Then I decided to go to school. And that there gave me a little more because I liked school and wanted to be able to do well. Then I fell in love and that was another step. And to me now, I'm at a point where it's not worth it to go off the meds.



Joaquin

My dad takes the car keys away if I don't take the meds

Motivation Challenge



Motivation Challenge also sounds like

I hate taking these meds

Staff make me take it

The judge says I must take it

As soon as I'm off this court order...

I'll get thrown out of my housing if I don't get the shot

Key Question:

Motivation Challenge

Is there anything that
trouble concentrating
is keeping you from doing that
you really wish you could do?



Support Strategy: Finding Personal Motivation to Use Psych Meds



These five tips can help us find our personal motivation for using meds:

1. Make sure the medication is helpful. It only makes sense to get motivated to take medicine that is helping.
2. Put a timeframe around using meds. Nobody knows for sure if we will have to use medicine for the rest of our lives. Say to yourself: *FOR RIGHT NOW, I am using medication that is helpful to me.*
3. Stop judging ourselves harshly. Taking medicine does not mean we are crazy. It does not make us a good person or a bad person, a weak person or a strong person. It's just a tool.
4. Identify the things mental health challenges are interfering with.
5. It can be helpful to take a picture of our personal motivators and tape them to our pill bottle(s). Each time we take the pill, we can say *this one is for* _____ and add our personal motivator.



My Personal Motivators

Is medicine helpful to you?

- Yes No, I need to talk to my doctor I'm not sure

I will stop judging myself harshly for using meds.

e.g. Instead of thinking I am weak and shouldn't need meds, I will say I am strong and have made my choice to use meds for now so that I can keep up with my responsibilities.

Instead of thinking: **I will say:**

List two things your mental health challenges are interfering with? (*e.g. my mental health challenge is interfering with keeping a job*)

1. _____
2. _____

Review your list above. Each of the things you listed are personal motivators. Add each one to the blank in each sentence below (*e.g. I am using this medicine so I can keep a job*)

1. I am using this medicine so I can _____
2. I am using this medicine so I can _____



My Plan for Staying Motivated

To stay motivated, I will (*check all that apply*)

- Tell my doctor or therapist about my personal motivators
- Tell my family and/or friends about my personal motivators
- Take pictures of my personal motivators and...
 - Look at the pictures on my phone each time I take meds
 - Keep pictures near my pill bottle(s)
 - Tape the pictures to my pill bottle(s)
 - Set a reminder on my phone to look at pictures of my motivators 3x a day
- When I take the pill(s), I will say "*this one is for*" and say my personal motivator out loud (*e.g. This one is for keeping my job.*)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Joaquin

My mental health challenges are interfering with **concentrating when I play soccer.**

I am taking the meds so I can **play soccer and help my team make state finals.**



Peter

*The meds aren't working.
They don't do anything for me*

Meds Helpful Challenge



Meds Helpful Challenge also sounds like...

Who gets to say if meds are helpful?

My husband likes it when I take the meds. He says I'm easier to get along with. But they don't do a thing for me.

Unrealistic expectations about what meds can do

I take the meds when I'm depressed but they don't work

The meds aren't making me normal. I still hear voices

This medicine isn't working

Key Questions for Meds Helpful Challenge

How will we know meds
are working for you?

If meds are working,
what do you hope will be
different in 2 weeks? In
2 months? A year?





How I Will Know Medicine is Helping Me: Antipsychotic Meds

The medicine I have been prescribed:

If this medicine works for me, I may experience some effects within:

 (hours/days/weeks)







To experience the full effect, it may take:

 (days/weeks/months)

In order to be helpful, I need to take my antipsychotic medication:

Every day Whenever I need it (PRN) Other: _____

How I hope medicine will help me: Place a check in the box next to the medication effects that are most important to you. Or, in your own words, write how you hope the medicine helps.

- Concentrate better 
- Sleep better 
- Remember things better 
- Feel more relaxed 
- Feel more comfortable around others 
- Have more awareness; less confusion about what may or may not be true 

My words: I hope meds help me _____ so that I can _____

What other things can help? Medication may help you feel better. There are also things you can do to help yourself feel better. Often the pathway into recovery means finding the right balance between our psychiatric medicine (what we take) and our Personal Medicine (the things we do to feel better and how they help).
Example: My Personal Medicine is listening to my playlist because it helps decrease my voices.

My Personal Medicine for psychosis is:

Keeping track. Use the tracker below to keep track of how you are doing over the next two weeks. Indicate if you took your pill medicine, if you used your Personal Medicine, and whether you felt better, worse, or stayed the same. Share your tracker with your doctor at your next appointment.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Took my pill medicine? <input type="checkbox"/> Used my Personal Medicine? Today was: <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> The Same
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Support Strategy: Find common ground on what "meds working" means

- ✓ Antipsychotics
- ✓ Antidepressants
- ✓ Mood Stabilizers
- ✓ Anxiolytics



How I Will Know Medicine is Helping Me: Antipsychotic Meds

The medicine I have been prescribed:

Aripiprazole

If this medicine works for me, I may experience some effects within:

2 weeks (hours/days/weeks)

To experience the full effect, it may take:

6-8 weeks (days/weeks/months)

In order to be helpful, I need to take my antipsychotic medication:

Every day Whenever I need it (PRN) Other: _____

How I hope medicine will help me: Place a check in the box next to the medication effects that are most important to you. Or, in your own words, write how you hope the medicine helps.

Concentrate better



Feel more relaxed



Sleep better



Feel more comfortable around others



Remember things better



Have more awareness; less confusion about what may or may not be true



My words: I hope meds help me Feel less scared so that I can go back to church



Q&A

Where might you embed the self-report in your care pathway?

-
- ✓ Prior to med appointments
 - ✓ At intake
 - ✓ Prior to annual treatment planning



Zain

(Taking meds as prescribed)

I'm not working. I just go to (the program) everyday and then come back home and get into bed. I don't really do anything. I just go to my doctor and he tweaks my meds. (Interviewer) - You said the medication has to be adjusted just right in order to be able to move ahead? (Zain) - Yeah, because I have a chemical imbalance, and it has to be balanced right.



The Passivity Challenge

I have a biochemical brain imbalance that needs to be balanced...

So I go back to my psychiatrist who tweaks my medication because...

But the meds don't work and I get even more depressed...

So every month I go to a psychiatrist who prescribes meds to balance my brain biochemistry...

Then I go home and wait for my biochemistry to get balanced...



Passivity Challenge also sounds like

Meds haven't cured me

I can't go back to school yet

Why can't you just fix what's wrong with my daughter?

*She needs her meds tweaked
(passivity contagion)*

Key Question to get
the conversation started:

In addition to meds, are there
other things you are doing to
help yourself?



Support Strategy: Activation

I have a biochemical brain imbalance that needs to be balanced...

So I go back to my psychiatrist who tweaks my medication because...

But the meds don't work and I get even more depressed...

So every month I go to a psychiatrist who prescribes meds to balance my brain biochemistry...

Then I go home and wait for my biochemistry to get balanced...





Essential Strategy - Activation

Personal Medicine

Medicine can be what you DO, not just what you take.

Finding the right balance between your Personal Medicine and your psych meds can be a pathway into the life you want

Zain's Personal Medicine

On a good day, skateboarding downtown helps me focus and forget my problems for a minute.

On a rough day, taking a long shower helps me get out of bed.



Personal Medicine Worksheet

What I do to feel better

brush my teeth

and how it helps me

Gives me some confidence to be around people and at least it's the beginning of respecting myself.



Just like a cast can't heal a broken leg, psychiatric meds can't do all the work of getting us through mental health challenges. Meds can help us achieve our goals, but we have to get active too.

Ask yourself: What do I do to feel better _____ and how does it help _____.

Here are some examples:

- ▶ What I do to feel better *is read spiritual teachings* and it helps *bring me peace so I feel less anxious.*
- ▶ What I do to feel better *is weed my vegetable garden* and it *gets my mind off my troubles.*
- ▶ What I do to feel better *is look at photos of my friends* and it *reminds me I'm loved when I'm feeling bad about myself.*

All of these are examples of Personal Medicine. Personal Medicine is what we DO. Psychiatric medicine is what we TAKE. They work together to help us through our mental health challenges.

Now it's your turn to discover your Personal Medicine and to make a plan for using it.

My Personal Medicine	My Personal Medicine Plan
<p>What I do to feel better:</p> 	<p>I will use this Personal Medicine when:</p>
<p>how it helps me:</p> 	<p>I will share my Personal Medicine with:</p>





Salima

My husband wants children. I want children. These meds will hurt my baby.

Trade-Off Challenge

- Benefits & Risks
 - ✓ Health concerns
- Wanted & Unwanted Effects
 - ✓ Side effects



Trade-Off Challenge also sounds like...


The cure is worse than the illness

It's not worth taking these meds

On TV the commercial said to call if my face starts twitching

These meds are making me gain weight

My mom knows this guy who died in his sleep and he was on the same meds as me




Key Question for Trade-Off Challenge

It seems you are not sure if it's worth taking the meds? Help me understand more about that.

Do you have concerns about the meds and your health?



Support Strategy for Side Effect Trade-Offs: Help the person prepare for SDM

My Side Effect Plan

We don't have to live with unbearable side effects that make it hard to do the important things in our life. Just like a tightrope walker has to find good balance in order to move forward, the same is true for us. We need to work with the doctor to find a livable balance between the good and not-so-good effects of medication. This worksheet will help.

Describe your side effects using these two steps:

Step 1: Describe the side effect you experience
Step 2: Say how it interferes with what's important to you

Here are some examples:



- ▶ *I feel like a zombie and don't have the energy to work out anymore.*
- ▶ *The meds make my hands shake so I can't type fast at my job.*
- ▶ *The meds make me so tired I can't keep up with my responsibilities like cooking for my family.*

Now it's your turn to plan what you will say to the doctor about side effects. Complete the card below.

What I will say to my doctor	Our side effect plan
<p>The side effect I experience:</p> <p>How it interferes with what's important to me:</p> <p>I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Let the doctor read about my side effects<input type="checkbox"/> Explain my side effect and how it interferes<input type="checkbox"/> Ask someone I trust to go to the appointment with me _____<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<p>To manage side effects, the doctor and I agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Lower the dose _____<input type="checkbox"/> Change the time I take meds _____<input type="checkbox"/> Change my med _____<input type="checkbox"/> Add a side effect med _____<input type="checkbox"/> Try another type of treatment _____<input type="checkbox"/> Stop the med<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <p>My next steps:</p>

The side effect I experience is
my hands shake
and it interferes with
my work on car engines

Support Strategy for Health Trade-Offs: Help the person prepare for SDM

 My concerns	Preparing for shared decision making 
<p>The medicine that concerns me: <u>Lithium</u></p>	<p>What I've heard about this medicine and where I heard it:</p>
<p>I'm concerned about: <i>(check all that apply)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Getting addicted<input type="checkbox"/> Gaining weight<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual dysfunction<input type="checkbox"/> Getting diabetes<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy<input type="checkbox"/> Movement disorders<input type="checkbox"/> My underlying health condition<input type="checkbox"/> Dying<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<p><u>My sister told me "No medicine. Not even an aspirin". I believe her.</u></p>
<p>My words: <u>I am worried lithium will hurt my baby</u></p>	<p>Questions for my doctor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> What are the health risks of this medicine?<input type="checkbox"/> What are the risks of not taking this medicine?<input type="checkbox"/> What are other treatments that could help?<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Are there non-medication therapies that could help?<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Q&A

How can use of the
Meds Helpful
Worksheets be woven
into your program's
care pathway?



Join our conspiracy of hope



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