

Tips on Helping with Medication Compliance (for Family Members)



Capital Health

Family support is very helpful when your family member needs encouragement to take his/her medication.

Some ways to help your loved one take his/her medication are:

- Encourage your family member to take his/her medication. Do not threaten. Forcing by threats is only a brief solution.
- If you think your family member is not taking his/her medication, ask. Do not judge or threaten.
- If he/she has stopped taking medication do not blame, scold, or punish. He/she may be reluctant to tell you the truth again. Ask your family member to explain why he/she is not taking the medication.
- Explain to your family member the benefits of medication such as better sleep and less anxiety. Do not scare him/her into taking pills.
- Try to help your family member see the benefit of taking medication (such as helping to meet his/her life goals). Share examples of what you notice has changed since taking medications. (For example: easier to talk to, looks calmer, looks better rested.)
- Encourage your family member to avoid alcohol or “street” drugs.
- Help your family member find a doctor who communicates well with families.
- Make sure your family member knows about the medication’s side effects. Your family member is more likely to cope with side effects if they are known in advance.
- Listen to complaints about side effects. Try to avoid complaining about side effects in front of your family member. Discuss your concerns with your family member’s doctor.
- The information sheet titled “Dealing With the Side Effects of Medication” will be helpful.
- Make sure everyone in the family agrees that your family member needs medication.

Adapted from: How to Help Someone Who Stops Taking Their Medications, by Peter Weiden, In Schizophrenia Digest, Fall 2002 Vol. 9(4) by: Susan Charlton RN, BScN and Elizabeth Emberly RN, BScN (CDMHP, 2003)

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