

## **A Parents' Guide to Mental Health Treatment for Children**

### ***10 Things Parents Should Know About Prescription Drugs and Your Child's Mental Health***

- 1.** Your child should be appropriately evaluated and diagnosed by a doctoral-level mental health specialist before any mental health treatment, with or without medication, is prescribed.
- 2.** Your child has a right to behavioral therapy before drugs are prescribed.
- 3.** You have a right to know the safety, efficacy and potential side effects of prescription drugs on your child. Ask your doctor to provide you the best available data on the effects of the medication, and ask her or him to explain it clearly if you don't understand. Also, ask about interactions between multiple medications.
- 4.** Before your child is given a prescription drug for a mental health issue, ask your physician to provide information about how the medication works to solve the problems your child is experiencing.
- 5.** Ask your doctor whether the medication being prescribed to your child has been approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for the diagnosed condition.
- 6.** Ask your doctor for information on how the drug performed in other children.
- 7.** If medication is required, your child should not be prescribed doses above the upper range for which the drug has been recommended and approved. Ask your doctor what those limits are and where your child's prescription falls in the range.
- 8.** Your child should be treated by a doctoral-level mental health specialist who has the expertise and time necessary to diagnose and treat patients even after medication has begun. Some medications can worsen mental health conditions while dosages are being adjusted, and some may cause new behavioral problems. Your child must be treated by a mental health doctor as well as the prescribing physician until medications have significantly improved and stabilized your child's condition.
- 9.** Prescription mental health drugs may pose additional specific risks to women who are or may become pregnant while taking the medication. Women should ask their doctor about specific risks the prescription drugs pose to the fetus and mother. Also, ask about alternative treatments such as psychotherapy that pose no medication risks to the mother, fetus or newborn.
- 10.** You have a right to change your child's treatment at any time.

# TRUTH IN DRUGS

Restoring a Safe & Effective Mental Health System

## **About The Truth in Drugs Campaign**

The Truth in Drugs Campaign seeks to restore psychotherapy as the first line treatment for behavioral disorders and ensure patients and their loved ones understand their choices before medication is prescribed. A growing body of research indicates that many patients are not benefiting from prescribed medications. Many of these medications are costly, ineffective and even harmful. Drug maker marketing expenses and the proliferation of inappropriately prescribed medications have become a significant factor in rising healthcare costs. Our campaign seeks to establish new standards of patient care so that millions of Americans receive the mental health services they need and deserve.

## **Get Involved**

Join the Truth in Drugs campaign! Individuals and organizations are invited to unite behind our principles to assure that youth and adults receive the best and most appropriate care possible. The more we all speak with one voice, the better our chances of putting patients first when providing mental health services. Together, we can restore a safe and effective mental health system and on which millions can depend. For more information about the Truth in Drugs Campaign and how to become involved, visit [www.truthindrugs.com](http://www.truthindrugs.com). Or, follow the Truth in Drugs Campaign on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) (@truthindrugs), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)

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