

Baritz Wellness Center, P.C.

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Psychoactive Drug Reduction - Introduction

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A psychoactive drug is one that affects a person's mental state and often their behavior. Whether they are used for emotional disturbances, mental problems, pain control or "recreation" their basic function is the same; they operate by altering the neurotransmitters in the brain and can be very addictive. Many people have successfully reduced or eliminated psychoactive drugs through the use of nutritional supplements and lifestyle changes. Our program calls for a very gradual tapering off of psychoactive drugs.

- Each step is only a small reduction of medication and you are given time to stabilize at that level before any further reductions are taken; this is a major safety feature. Our primary concern is for your health and safety. We believe that is a mistake to withdraw too quickly or to take further reductions when you have not yet stabilized with regard to mood and sleep.
- Our program has two parts: nutritional support and medical supervision. We provide nutritional support, and medical supervision is provided by your prescribing physician.

Medical Supervision

Determining the sequence of medications to withdraw from

- Patients to taper off one medication at a time. If you are taking more than one medication selecting the first medication to withdraw is important. Your physician will select the first medication to reduce; usually the easiest to withdraw from. For example if you are taking medication A to counter the side effects of medication B it is best to withdraw from medication B first.

Establish the reduction schedule

- To minimize discontinuance reactions it is essential that the reduction be done slowly and with small steps. Ideally reductions are no more than a 10% every one or two weeks. Most medications are not available in such small increments so either take the smallest reduction permitted by the available doses or go to a compounding pharmacy to have the doses custom made. Plan to start reductions once you have completed the Nutrition Starter Program.
- The reduction schedule should be flexible so that you can proceed at a comfortable rate. You may need to spend weeks or longer at a certain level before you are comfortable with further reductions. It is not a race and every day that you are on a reduced dose can have positive effects on your body and life.

Ongoing guidance

- Your physician is an important resource for guidance on issues that might arise while reducing medications.

Nutritional Support

Phase 1: Starter Program

- In the Starter Program we build you up with nutritional supplements and provide you with stress reduction and lifestyle strategies to help you prepare for the changes and challenges of medication withdrawals.
- We also address any issues such as constipation, use of street drugs or acid blocker medication.

Phase 2: Nutritional support during medication reductions

- Once you have been on the Starter Program for at least 30 days, are not constipated, are not using street drugs or acid blocker medication and are doing well (particularly with regard to mood and sleep) you are ready to take your first reduction based on the program established by your physician.
- We see you once or twice a month to follow your progress, adjust nutritional supplements as needed and provide nutritional support and lifestyle strategies for special problems that might arise like anxiety, insomnia, etc.

References & Resources

Safe Harbor, International Guide to the World of Alternative Mental Health; www.alternativementalhealth.com
International Collation for Drug Awareness; <http://www.drugawareness.org>
Second Opinion Society; www.walnet.org/llf/drugs/psychdrugs1.html
Psychiatric Drug Facts, With Dr. Peter Breggin; www.breggin.com

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