

Module 6

Non-Medical Professionals and Psychotropic Medications: Legal, Ethical, and Training Issues

Learning Goals

1. Identify specific legal constraints on non-medical professionals related to prescription medications.
2. Review trends about non-medical mental health professions and prescribing authority.
3. Describe ethical and legal issues related to the use of psychotropic medications in children.
4. Define competence and recommended training requirements as they relate to practicing with medicated clients.
5. Enumerate standards for valid informed consent, and list what constitutes “adequate” information.
6. Recognize key legislation related to clients’ rights and the obligation to obtain informed consent.
7. Demonstrate understanding of children’s rights to autonomy, self-determination, and confidentiality, as well as their capacity to consent.
8. Discuss possible impact of psychotropic medications on children’s identity.
9. Explain a practitioner’s ethical responsibility when referring children for medication, encouraging medication compliance and monitoring effects.

Questions for Practice, Supervision and Administration

1. Review one of your current cases receiving psychotropic medication and evaluate:
 - a. Did I meet the requirements for valid informed consent?

- b. Were my client's rights to autonomy and self-determination respected? How was the child involved in the decision to have medication prescribed? If the child was not involved, is the child aware that he or she is taking psychotropic medication?
- c. Did someone discuss with this child his or her feelings about taking medication? Is the child being empowered or disempowered by taking medication? If the child experiences adverse effects such as agitation or depression, how is the child, and how are the child's caretakers, expected to recognize and act on them as such?
- d. Does the treatment meet the criteria of "First, do no harm"?
- e. Were alternative treatments attempted prior to medication being prescribed?