

## **Considerations About Medications As They Relate To Treatment Plan Goals and Strategies**

Rarely will a consumer identify “take meds,” or “medication compliance” as a personal goal! Medications are tools to help a person manage symptoms, thus, a goal/concern might be: “Stop hearing voices” or “Get rid of paranoid /disturbing thoughts,” or “Be able to manage impulses better.” Medications are often one of the tools or interventions and the service provider’s role certainly includes assisting people with maintaining the medication regimen or accessing meds.

That being said, it is good to remember that there are also non-medical ways to help manage disturbing symptoms, and assisting people to explore them, (particularly people who have bad experiences with medications or who are unwilling to take them) can provide relationship building, client-centered experiences.

Following are some questions about medications that NAMI suggests parents and people ask their providers. It is a good idea to ponder these and be prepared with answers:

- Are there psychosocial interventions that might be tried before medication is used, or effectively used in combination with medication, which may help to lower the required medication dose?
- Does research support the use of the recommended medication for a child that is my child’s age and with similar needs
- How does medication fit within the overall treatment plan and how will we coordinate with other treatment, such as therapy, school, behavior plans and more? (for adults: Work)
- What should we (I) be looking for regarding changes in behavior, changes in symptoms, and who should we contact with questions about these changes and the medication?
- How will (I) our family, our child, and the treating provider monitor progress, behavior changes, symptoms and safety concerns?
- How will (I) we know when it is time to talk about stopping medication treatment (or lowering dosage) and what steps need to be taken before medication is stopped?