

**“I NEED MY ALPRAZOLAM FOR ANXIETY AND MY
TEMAZEPAM FOR SLEEP”
AN APPROACH TO INHERITED PRESCRIPTIONS**

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Faculty/Presenter Disclosure

- **Faculty:** Nicole Nakatsu
- **Relationships with commercial interests:**
 - **Grants/Research Support:** None
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 - **Consulting Fees:** None
 - **Other:** None

Mitigating Potential Bias

- Fresenius Kabi, did not, at the time of the presentation produce any narcotics nor did they have any input on the content of the presentation.

Learning Objectives

- ① Understand some of the risks and benefits of discontinuing benzodiazepines
- ① Have a basic strategy for tapering benzodiazepines

Case: Doris

- 65yo F with GAD, started on alprazolam for panic attacks 2 years ago. She currently take 0.5 mg 3 times daily.
- She also has insomnia for which she takes temazepam 15 mg every night x 5 years
- She does complain of not thinking clearly and has fallen twice recently but nothing more than some bruises.
- Other medications include: amlodipine 5 mg daily

Short term and long term harms

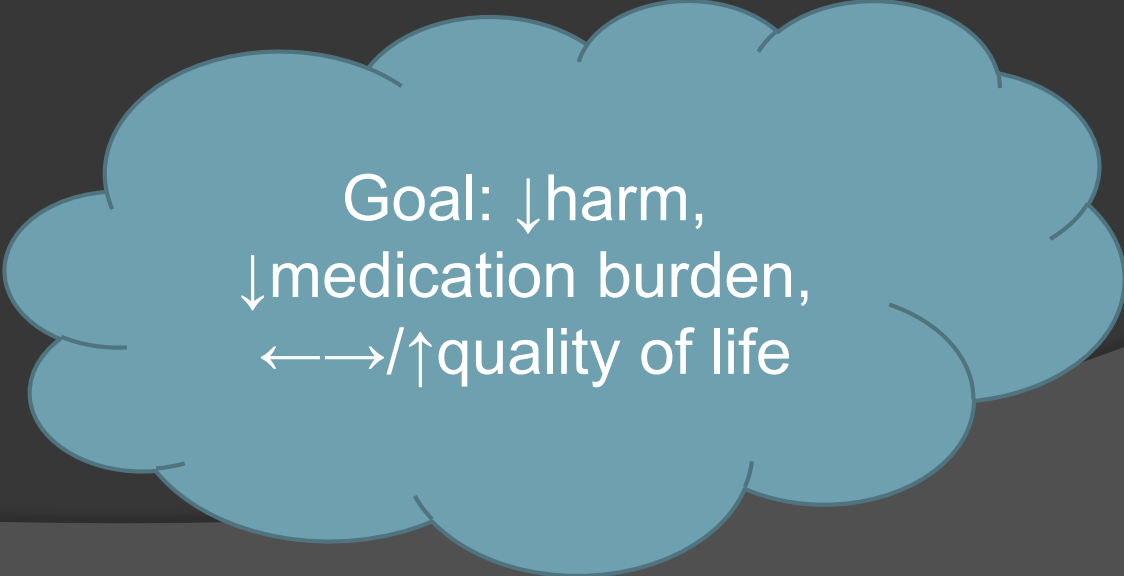
- ⦿ Daytime sedation
- ⦿ Falls, fractures
- ⦿ Cognitive and functional impairment
- ⦿ Memory disorders
- ⦿ Motor vehicle accidents
- ⦿ Physical dependence, benzodiazepine use disorder
- ⦿ Risk of diversion
- ⦿ Respiratory depression/death (especially in combination with alcohol or opioids)

Benzodiazepine withdrawal symptoms

- ⦿ Common: GI symptoms, irritability, insomnia, anxiety, sweating
- ⦿ Less common, more severe: tremors, dysphoria, psychosis, delirium tremens, seizures

De-prescribing benzodiazepines

- Is the planned and supervised process of dose reduction or stopping of benzodiazepines because they are either causing harm or no longer providing benefit

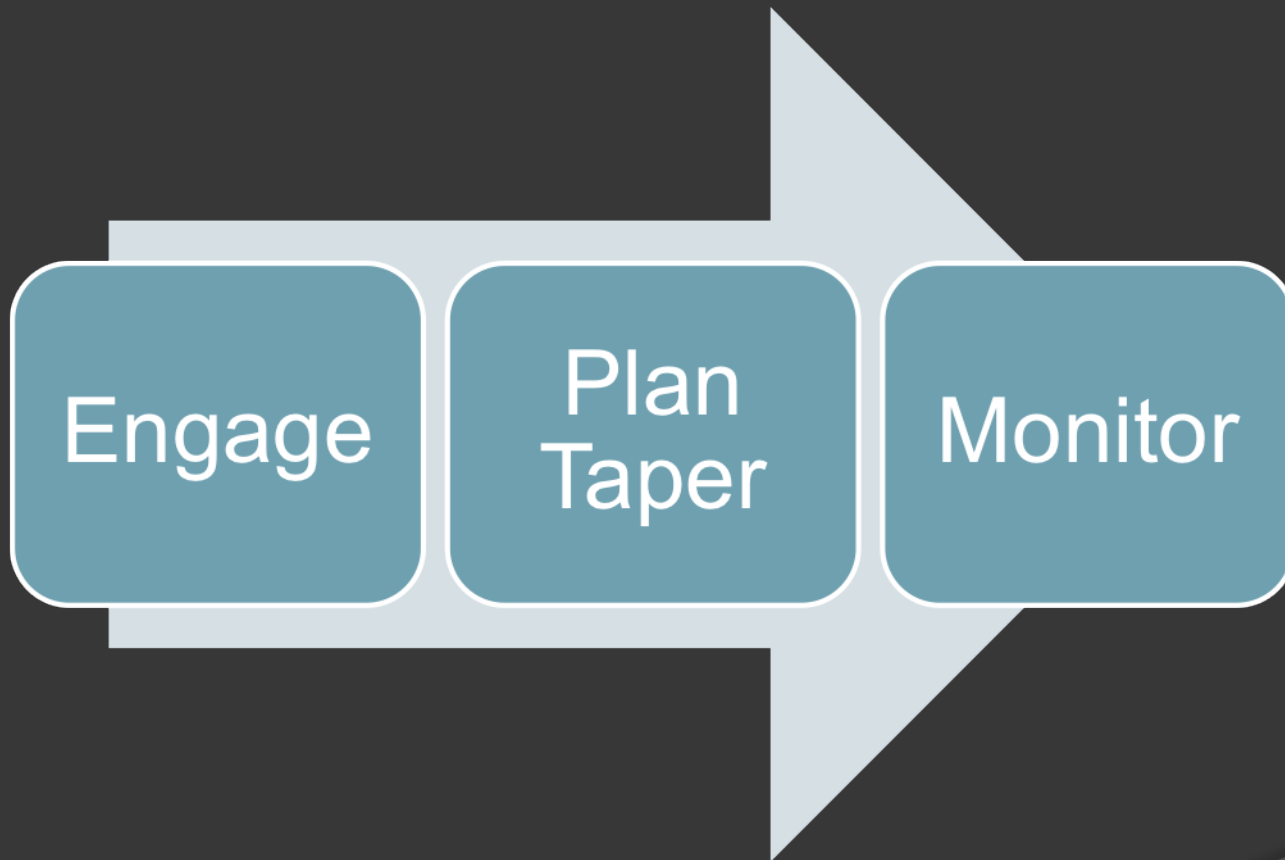


Goal: ↓harm,
↓medication burden,
←→/↑quality of life

De-prescribing benzodiazepines

- ⦿ Consider initial and current reason for taking benzodiazepine
- ⦿ May have to delay taper to manage underlying conditions

De-Prescribing Benzodiazepines



Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

- ⦿ Discuss goals and preferences
- ⦿ They are part of the planning process!
- ⦿ Discuss adverse effects and benefits associated with long term benzodiazepine use
 - Adverse effects: memory, cognitive impairment, accidents and falls
 - Benefits: improved thinking, better memory, less daytime drowsiness, decreased risk of falling

Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

- ⦿ Discuss the process – Decrease in small increments to minimize withdrawal effects
- ⦿ Discuss adverse effects – usually mild and short term (days to weeks). May include: GI symptoms, irritability, insomnia, anxiety, sweating

Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

- ⦿ Can taper using current benzodiazepine or convert to a long acting benzodiazepine (diazepam or clonazepam)
- ⦿ Consider available doses of different benzos
- ⦿ The patient should be involved in planning taper

Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

Benzodiazepine	Equivalent to 5 mg diazepam (mg) *
Alprazolam (Xanax®)**	0.5
Bromazepam (Lectopam®)	3–6
Chlordiazepoxide (Librium®)	10–25
Clonazepam (Rivotril®)	0.5–1
Clorazepate (Tranxene®)	7.5
Flurazepam (Dalmane®)	15
Lorazepam (Ativan®)	0.5–1
Nitrazepam (Mogadon®)	5–10
Oxazepam (Serax®)	15
Temazepam (Restoril®)	10–15
Triazolam (Halcion®)**	0.25

Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

- ⦿ Taper benzodiazepine 10-25% q2-3 weeks
- ⦿ Usually bigger dose reductions to start and then smaller as get around 25% of original dose
- ⦿ Can use planned drug free days near end

Engage

Plan Taper

Monitor

- See your patient regularly to assess for withdrawal symptoms and benefits
- Adjust taper according to patient response/situation
- Remember, any dose reduction is a positive step!

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Case: Doris

- ⦿ Any other information you would want?
- ⦿ Do you want to deprescribe her benzos?
- ⦿ If so, what side effects of benzodiazepines might you discuss with her?
- ⦿ If she does want to taper, what would you tell her to expect?
- ⦿ How would you go about de-prescribing for Doris?

Drug	Available doses
Alprazolam	0.25mg, 0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg scored tabs
Temazepam	15, 30 mg caps
Diazepam	2mg, 5mg, 10mg scored tabs
Lorazepam	0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg tabs (0.5 mg tab not scored) 0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg SL tab
Oxazepam	10mg, 15mg, 30mg scored tabs
Triazolam	0.125mg, 0.25mg scored tabs
Flurazepam	15mg, 30mg cap
Nitrazepam	5mg, 10mg scored tab
Clonazepam	0.25mg, 0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg scored tabs

Case: Doris – taper option

Week	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15
Diazepam schedule	5mg QID	5 mg TID	5 mg BID	5 mg OD	3 mg OD	2 mg OD	1 mg OD	stop
Total daily dose	20 mg	15 mg	10 mg	5 mg	3 mg	2	1	0

Drug	Available doses
Alprazolam	0.25mg, 0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg scored tabs
Temazepam	15, 30 mg caps
Diazepam	2mg, 5mg, 10mg scored tabs

References

- ◉ Deprescribing.org *Benzodiazepine and Z-drug (BZRA) Deprescribing Notes*, Feb 2019
- ◉ http://nationalpaincentre.mcmaster.ca/opioid/cgop_b_app_b06.html
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- ◉ Pottie K et al. *Deprescribing benzodiazepine receptor agonists. Evidence-based clinical practice guideline*