

Consider how the following Core Principles of Safe Pharmacologic Care are currently applied in your setting and where there may be opportunities to **enhance safety, consistency, and patient-centered care.**

Treat the cause.

Choose medications based on the underlying cause of behavioral dysregulation, not simply applying a cookie-cutter approach or providing a medication based solely on the exhibited behavior or its severity.

Start with one medication that most effectively addresses the suspected etiology influencing behavioral dysregulation.

Using one well-chosen medication at an effective dose often provides better outcomes and fewer complications than combining multiple medications or using a series of medications in succession.

Use doses appropriate for the age and weight, while minimizing excess dosing that can cause side effects.

Children are more sensitive to medication effects. Use the lowest effective dose and monitor carefully.

Non-pharmacologic interventions still matter.

Medication should complement — not replace — communication, environmental modification, and supportive caregiver involvement, which should continue even after medication is introduced.

Reassess frequently.

If treatment isn't working, reconsider the diagnosis, dose, or contributing factors before adding medications.