

## Rapid Tranquillization of Adults with Crisis Behaviours

*This tool was developed to help primary care providers in community and Emergency Department settings whose patients with DD are exhibiting crisis behaviours and require rapid tranquillization.*

**TABLE 1: GOALS AND CONSIDERATIONS IN RAPID TRANQUILLIZATION OF ADULTS WITH DD**

<p><b>Goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar for all people exhibiting crisis behaviours, including those with DD.</li> <li>• Reduce agitation and associated risk of harm to the patient, and where applicable, to others, in the safest and least intrusive manner possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific Considerations regarding Psychotropic Medications for Adults with DD</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should guide management decisions, including in crisis situations.</li> <li>• Often on multiple medications and at increased risk of adverse medication interactions.</li> <li>• Some may have atypical responses or side-effects at lower doses, and some cannot describe harmful or distressing effects of the medications that they are taking <sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>• Adults with DD associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), about 30% of adults with DD, may react paradoxically to new psychotropic medications (e.g., when given a benzodiazepine, they may become agitated rather than sedated).</li> <li>• When considering psychotropic medications for adults with DD it is important to elicit their history with such medications and the patient's or caregivers preferences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Initial treatment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use a single medication initially, preferably a benzodiazepine at a sufficient dose</b> (e.g., lorazepam 4 mg), and wait the indicated time prior to repeating the dose. Experienced Emergency Department psychiatrists who work with adults with DD report that most crisis behaviours can be managed with <b>10 mg or less of lorazepam</b>. This is preferable when effective, as it avoids the distressing side effects that often accompany antipsychotics.</li> <li>• Given that antipsychotic medications are often inappropriately prescribed for adults with DD <sup>1</sup>, reducing the exposure of adults with DD exhibiting crisis behaviours to these medications would help to mitigate this problem.</li> </ul>

Bradley, E & Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Initiative Co-editors (2011). Auditing psychotropic medication therapy. In: Tools for the primary care of people with developmental disabilities. Available from: <http://www.surreyplace.on.ca/documents/Primary%20Care/BBRapid%20Tranquillization.pdf> (accessed 18 April 2016).