



Talking Points on Psychopharmacology and Children's Mental Health

AACAP's Role as the Trusted Authority: AACAP is the leading professional medical organization dedicated to advancing the mental health of children, adolescents, and families through research, education, and advocacy. Our members are board-certified experts in diagnosing and treating psychiatric conditions in youth.

SSRIs as a Treatment Option: When clinically appropriate, SSRIs can be a valuable tool in the treatment of depression, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. Decisions about prescribing these medications are made carefully, based on a comprehensive evaluation by a trained medical professional.

Other Evidence-Based Medication Options: In addition to SSRIs, there is strong evidence for other medication classes for treating psychiatric conditions in youth. For example, stimulants for the treatment of ADHD; atypical antipsychotics for bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and irritability associated with autism spectrum disorder; and mood stabilizers, including lithium, for bipolar disorder.

Emphasizing Safety: Like any medical treatment, psychotropic medications require monitoring. Physicians work closely with families to assess the risks and benefits of psychopharmacology, as well as to monitor for potential side effects, altogether ensuring each child receives individualized care.

The Importance of a Comprehensive Approach: Medication is often part of a broader treatment plan that may include talk therapy, lifestyle and school changes, and family support. AACAP strongly advocates for a personalized approach considering each child's unique needs.

Commitment to Evidence-Based Care: Treatment of childhood mental health conditions, including the use of psychopharmacology, is based on decades of research and real-world outcomes showing consistent improvement and excellent tolerability in both the short and long term. AACAP supports the responsible use of evidence-based treatments to improve the well-being of children and adolescents.