

REDUCE Study Workstream 2: REviewing long-term anti-Depressant treatment Use by Careful monitoring in Everyday practice

TOPIC GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONER FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction

1. **Welcome** and thank you for volunteering to take part in this focus group. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important. I realize you are busy and I appreciate your time. Name and role on study.
2. **Introduction:** This focus group discussion is designed to assess your current views and experiences with patients withdrawing from long-term antidepressants, why they might wish to withdraw, and why withdrawal might be difficult. The aim is to develop new ways of helping people withdraw from treatment, taking into account the difficulties they might face.
3. **By way of reminder:**
 - Check participants are still willing to take part, notes that observers are present, and will be audio recorded.
 - Remind them it will take approximately 60 minutes.
 - Their responses will be kept confidential, and quotes used will not identify them.
 - They can change their mind about taking part in the study and stop at any point.
4. **Rules of engagement in focus groups:**
 - To speak one at a time, and allow others to finish their point.
 - To respect each other's point of view, whilst disagreeing if they wish.
 - To be honest even when their responses may not be in agreement with the group.
 - That responses made by all participants be kept confidential – what is said here stays here.
 - The study is to ask them about their experiences and views of helping patients to stop taking antidepressants. Therefore there are no right or wrong answers as it is their views that are important to us.
5. **Ask if the participants have any questions.**
6. **Start recording.**

WARM UP

Firstly, I'd like everyone to introduce themselves. Please could you tell us your name, job role and where you're based?

Topic 1: Long-term antidepressant use and knowing when discontinuation may be appropriate

1. I would like to invite you to share any clinical experiences you have of discontinuing antidepressants with a patient.

Prompts:

- Explain what happened and why?
- What is your current clinical practice for discontinuation?
- What problems have you encountered when discontinuing antidepressants?
- What have you found to help patients to discontinue their antidepressants?

2. What factors would you look for that indicate a patient is appropriate to discontinue from long-term antidepressants?

Prompts:

- a. Examples: Recovery, patient request, risk of side effects, potential benefits of discontinuation.
 - b. What impact might user experiences have on decision to discontinue ADs?
 - c. How do you come to the decision to stop a patient's antidepressants?
3. Can you think of any practical considerations that may occur when considering antidepressant discontinuation?

Prompts:

- How quickly do you taper antidepressants (if done)?
- Lack of dosage forms available to facilitate tapering.
- How solve these issues.

4. What are your thoughts on current guideline recommendations for long-term antidepressant use?

Prompts:

- What are your thoughts on the current NICE guidelines?
- How easy are the guidelines to follow?
- What questions do the guidelines leave you with?
- Any thoughts on presentation?

Hand out copies of current NICE Guidelines.

Topic 2: Negotiating the decision to discontinue antidepressants with patients.

5. How do you negotiate discontinuation of antidepressant medication with a patient?

Prompts:

- Whose decision is it in the end (to stop)?
- At what point is the discussion usually initiated?
- How do you feel about broaching the subject of discontinuation? How much do you push for people to withdraw? Perception of risk vs patient's wishes?

6. What is your involvement in discontinuing antidepressants with a patient?

Prompts:

- Can you explain why you might not get involved?
- What process do you follow if this topic is brought up by a patient?
- Have you ever discussed discontinuation of antidepressants with a patient?
- What would you like your involvement to be in the future?

CHECK FOR COMMENTS / QUESTIONS WITH CO-FACILITATOR

Topic 3: Role as a GP/NP/PCMHW in terms of supporting/negotiating appropriateness of discontinuation

7. What do you see as your role in negotiating medication discontinuation?

Invite to draw on real life clinical examples and ask to explain what happened.

Prompts:

- How typically do you view your role in the stopping process from deciding to stop through to stopping (or not)?
- Role of other HPs in dealing with medication discontinuation – GP, NP, Therapist, pharmacist, psychiatrist, etc.
- Relationships between practitioners?

Topic 4: How to optimise discussions about possible discontinuation with patients

8. Can you think of ways to improve discussions about possible discontinuation with patients?

Prompts:

- Usefulness of verbal / written advice to aid discontinuation.
- Role of support networks and ways of bringing others into the process where appropriate? Uses (e.g. decision making tools, source of social support, support /challenge /resistance to medical decision)? Challenges around introducing?
- How would you evaluate and monitor discontinuation (e.g. evaluate success)?

Topic 5: Ways to optimise implementation of a discontinuation intervention in routine practice

9. What would you like to see in an intervention to help people stop antidepressants?

Prompts:

- Supportive needs of patients / practitioners?
- Content / mode of delivery?
- Help from other team members?
- Help from outside the practice?
- How would you like to interact with the intervention?
- Would you like to see anyone else interacting with the intervention?
- What do you see as the role of a GP/NP/PCMHW as part of the intervention?
- **PCMHWs/NPs only:** How would you view the role of providing telephone support? In principle, if trained and paid to work on this for the study (as opposed to long-term) would this be something you'd be interested in / feel able to do?

10. What would an intervention to support treatment discontinuation look like in practice?

Prompts:

- Organisational issues, e.g. GP prescription systems.
- Who would drive the use of the intervention forward in your practice / CCG / professional body?
- How would you maintain use of an intervention over time?
- What would encourage you to use it?

Anything wish to raise that hasn't been discussed?

Any questions?

Moderator to check with observer for any further questions, then close focus group.

Debrief:

- Tell participants audio recorder is now being switched off.
- Thank participants for taking part in the focus group; excellent discussion.
- Revisit consent and reply slip.
- Ask if the participants have any questions / offer opportunity to discuss further following focus group.
- Let participants know will be sending summary of results at the end of the study.
- Distribute travel claims and inform invoices will be sent to practice ASAP.
- Thank participants again for taking part.