

The medical staff (nurse and prescriber) should work together to ensure that all monitoring is occurring on schedule and that vital signs and lab results are reviewed in a timely fashion. This will be of particular importance in the case of clozapine, especially during initial titration, where coordination requires that nursing ensure that the pharmacy in use is registered with the Clozapine Registry and able to dispense clozapine.

The prescriber should evaluate the individual's subjective medication side effects at each visit. In particular, the individual should be asked if she/he has any concerns that the medication has interfered with her/his ability to function and/or achieve goals, e.g., has he/she noticed any emotional dulling, clouded thinking, or problems with daytime sedation. If applicable, individuals' family members should also be asked to report any additional side effects that they have noticed.

The "Medication Side Effects Checklist" can be completed monthly during the first three months on any antipsychotic and quarterly thereafter. Individuals can complete the checklist prior to the visit or together with the clinicians.

## C. Monitoring Response to Antipsychotic Treatment

Individuals receiving care through OnTrackNY should be seen on a regular basis by the prescriber for medication management.

Clinicians should monitor the individual's response to antipsychotic medication intensively and continuously during the first month of treatment. The response of the individual to antipsychotic medication should be intensively and continuously monitored by all team members, but especially the medical team, during the first month of treatment--at minimum twice a month but preferably weekly--to monitor symptom response and the occurrence of bothersome side effects. If the individual is responsive to the medication and experiencing minimal side effects, then the frequency of contact with the prescriber can be decreased to every two weeks through the first six months. Thereafter, the prescriber should evaluate the individual on a monthly basis. This recommended frequency of contact should be considered a guideline to be modified on a case-by-case basis to reflect each individual's clinical need or other life circumstances. Individuals can review the handout "Preparing to Talk about Symptoms" before their visits with the team to help them articulate how their treatment is affecting their symptoms and functioning.

If after 4 weeks on an adequate dose of antipsychotic medication an individual continues to be distressed by symptoms or by associated side effects despite using strategies to alleviate them and/or the prescriber observes that an adequate symptom response has not been achieved, clinicians should initiate a discussion with the individual (and caregivers, when appropriate) regarding a change in antipsychotic treatment. If there are any changes to medications, then the prescriber should continue to see the individual on a weekly basis until she/he has stabilized on the new medication regimen.