

# Treating Depression and Medication Adherence

The best practice for the treatment of depression includes a plan involving therapy, self empowerment/recovery tools and medication. It is important when working with a depressed patient to communicate with all members of the treatment team about the treatment provided, the patient's status, and any potential complicating factors.

## **The APA Guidelines recommend the use of antidepressants for moderate to severe depression.**

Some helpful tips to keep your patients on track with medications:

- Discuss possible side effects and how to manage them
- Encourage patients to call with concerns rather than stopping or changing dose
- Discuss length of time expected before medication takes effect
- Ask patients if they have any difficulties filling prescriptions (co-pays, not on formulary)
- Ask how they are taking medications (correct dose, frequency, time of day)
- Review any other reasons presented for lack of adherence
- Give patients a medication tracker, so they can document adherence in writing
- Refer to website [liveandworkwell.com](http://liveandworkwell.com) for patient education and resources (medication information, interaction checker, etc.)

## Non-Prescribers Role in Medication Adherence

### **Non-prescribing clinicians play a role in medication adherence as well by:**

- Asking the patient about how their medication(s) is working
- Encouraging adherence and telling patients to call their prescriber if any concerns arise
- Coordinate/exchange information with all prescribers

## **Assessment**

In addition to the use of the Wellness Assessment to identify risk and monitor progress at multiple times during each episode of care, Optum encourages the use of the Patient Health Questionnaire PHQ-9 for screening and monitoring depressive symptoms over time. These tools can be found on [providerexpress.com](http://providerexpress.com).

The reliability of diagnosing improves when appropriate guidelines are used. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) Guidelines for the assessment and treatment of Major Depressive Disorder can be found on [providerexpress.com](http://providerexpress.com).

## **The following resources may be helpful to you and your patients:**

- [providerexpress.com](http://providerexpress.com) - Guidelines and patient education materials
- [DBSAlliance.org](http://DBSAlliance.org) - Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
- [Nami.org](http://Nami.org) - National Alliance on Mental Illness
- [liveandworkwell.com](http://liveandworkwell.com) - Optum's member website