



# Prescribing psychotropic medications to people in aged care – information and resources

## Clinical and professional practice guidelines

### Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

[RACGP aged care clinical guide \(Silver Book\), 5th edition](#) — this clinical guide provides guidance for GPs on providing care to older people over the age of 65 living in the community or in residential care. Part A: Common clinical conditions in aged care has relevant information in the following sections:

- [Behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia](#)
- [Deprescribing](#)

Find more [information and resources about psychotropics](#) on the RACGP website.

### Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP)

[Professional Practice Guideline 10: Antipsychotic medications as a treatment of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia \(PDF, 289 KB\)](#) — this guideline provides advice to psychiatrists on the benefits and risks of using antipsychotic medications.

### Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre

[Clinical Practice Guidelines and Principles of Care for People with Dementia \(PDF, 1.04 MB\)](#) — guidelines for health professionals and carers.

[Clinical Practice Guidelines and Principles of Care for People with Dementia: Recommendations \(PDF, 757 KB\)](#) — outline how to better respond to the needs and preferences of people living with dementia.

## Australian Government–funded services

The Australian Government provides funding for initiatives, services and resources that may help manage behaviours and symptoms of dementia. These are often available free or at low cost.

### Dementia Support Australia (DSA)

The **Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS)** provides support and advice to GPs, allied health professionals, service providers and individuals caring for people with dementia where behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) are affecting a person's care, either in residential aged care or home settings.

The DBMAS delivered by [DSA](#) is a free service with access to 24 hour phone advice and face to face support to family carers, primary and acute care staff, and aged care providers to improve the quality of life of a person living with dementia.

If a person is experiencing severe BPSD in a residential aged care setting, DBMAS can refer them to the **Severe Behaviour Response Teams (SBRT)** for additional support.

You can contact DSA on 1800 699 799.

DSA also provides a range of online resources, including [The Managing Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia Guide](#) (BPSD Guide) has been developed to provide guidance to clinicians in their role of assisting residential aged care staff, community care staff and family members caring for persons living with dementia, who present with behavioural and psychological symptoms.

## Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia (DA) (formerly Alzheimers Australia) represents Australians living with dementia and their families and carers. DA's online resources include:

- [The use of restraint and psychotropic medications in people with dementia \(PDF, 182 KB\)](#).
- [Help sheets](#) — a series of help sheets that provide advice, common sense approaches and practical strategies on issues commonly raised in dementia.
- [Video — Antipsychotics and dementia: Managing medications](#) — this short video features Professor Henry Brodaty (psychogeriatrician), Dr Julian Pierre (GP) and Tim Perry (consultant pharmacist) discussing the challenge of deprescribing antipsychotics for dementia patients and look for alternative solutions for symptoms.

## Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare has developed new cognitive impairment resources to provide information for health service organisations to help them improve the quality of care and health outcomes for people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium. There are a range of resources and examples of approaches to delivering health care to people with cognitive impairment.

- [Caring for Cognitive Impairment website](#) — the website has a range of resources and examples of approaches to delivering health care to people with cognitive impairment.
- [Infographic \(PDF, 86 KB\)](#) — reducing inappropriate use of antipsychotics in people with BPSD.

## NPS MedicineWise

NPS MedicineWise is a not-for-profit organisation that receives funding from the Australian Government to deliver a range of activities that enable people to make and act on the best decisions about medicines, medical tests, health technologies and other options for better health and economic outcomes.

NPS MedicineWise has a number of resources available with information on [how to manage behaviours and symptoms of dementia](#), including:

- Non-pharmacological strategies for managing behaviours and symptoms of dementia.
- Stepwise approach for managing the behaviours and symptoms of dementia, including common triggers.
- A tool to support residential aged care facility staff to facilitate a review for patients taking an antipsychotic medicine.

## Primary Health Networks (PHNs)

PHNs were established as independent primary health care organisations, located throughout Australia. The primary objectives of PHNs are to:

- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes
- improve the coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Some PHNs have developed resources for primary health care providers that are useful in guiding the management of dementia. Primary Health Tasmania has a [range of de-prescribing resources](#), including fact sheets on medications such as antipsychotics and benzodiazepines.

## Continuing professional development

### Dementia Training Australia

Dementia Training Australia (DTA) is the national provider of the [Dementia Training Program](#). This program offers accredited education, upskilling, and professional development for the workforce providing dementia care in the primary, acute and aged care sectors.

A [comprehensive list of DTA's courses and resources in dementia care](#), including the prevention and support for behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, designed specifically for GPs and acute care medical professionals is available on their website.

## Other training resources

### GP Supervisors Australia

[Diagnosing Dementia Teaching Plan \(PDF, 546 KB\)](#)

Teaching Plans and clinical reasoning challenges developed by GP Supervisors and Medical Educators.

### University of Tasmania

- [Understanding Dementia](#)
- [Preventing Dementia](#)

These free Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are suitable for all health professionals, building on the latest in international research on dementia. They are run throughout the year and is aimed at health professionals, policy makers, and people in the early stages of dementia.

## Other resources

### Royal Australasian College of Physicians

[Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine Top 5 Evolve Recommendations](#)

The Evolve initiative identifies a specialty's Top 5 clinical practices that, in particular circumstances, may be overused, provide little or no benefit or cause unnecessary harm.

## NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group

The NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group have developed the following [deprescribing tools](#) for clinicians to support deprescribing of a range of medications in older hospital patients:

- [Deprescribing Guide for Benzodiazepines and Z Drugs \(PDF, 147 KB\)](#)
- [Deprescribing Guide for Antipsychotics for Treatment of Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia \(PDF, 144 KB\)](#)