The appropriate use of psychotropic drugs in children and adolescents

**THE CHALLENGE**

17 – 22%
Prevalence of children with mental health disorders

31%
FDA-approved psychotropic medications for children

1 in 5
Number of children receiving services from appropriately trained practitioners

>75%
Prevalence of “off-label” (unapproved) use of prescriptions for children’s mental health treatment

**WHAT ROLE DO YOU PLAY?**

Child’s physical and mental health practitioners + Parent/caregiver + Child = The child’s treatment team

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Asking questions is a good way to stay involved in your child’s treatment plan.

1. **The treatment options**
   - Are these medications needed?
   - Will my child benefit from therapy?
   - Did my child get a full evaluation from a behavioral health practitioner?

2. **The medication**
   Has the medication been tested and approved for children? What are the:
   - Risks?
   - Benefits?
   - Side effects?

3. **The treatment plan**
   - How will I know my child is making progress?
   - How often will my child be checked after starting the medications? What happens if we don’t see progress?
   - What warning signs should I look for and when should I call the doctor?
   - Will the treatment be noted in my child’s health care records?
   - Will you talk to my child’s other health care providers?
   - Do you know of other medications my child is taking and are there risks in combining them?

**GOAL:** to get the RIGHT treatment for each child’s needs.