

Helping People with Mental Illness

A Mental Health Training Programme for Community Health Workers

Module D

Drug Treatments and Mental Illness



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About this course

This course is designed to help Community Health Workers with some of their day to day work. It was developed after consultation with Community Health Workers, Health and Social Care Forum members, psychiatric nurses and lecturers at the University of Port Elizabeth. We have tried to understand the needs of both community health workers and members of Township communities who suffer from or care for people with mental illness.

We have based the whole course on the idea that people with mental illness are vulnerable to stress. Stress can have a powerful effect on mental health. Helping people with mental health problems and those that care for them to reduce stress can be very helpful indeed. We hope this approach will be useful to Community Health Workers.

The course consists of eight modules on different topics in mental health. There are introduction modules and modules on helping people with their drug treatments, other ways to manage mental health problems and a module on how to assist with tracing people who default from the mental health services. It is possible to design your own course by picking from these modules. It is not necessary to use all eight modules. On the next page we make some suggestions as to how different courses might use the different modules.

The course is a 'train the trainers' course so each module contains:

- **A plan of each module divided into 'activities'**
- **Clear instructions on how to teach the module including resources needed**
- **A set of full size photocopies of all the slides used to teach the course.**

We hope that Community Health Workers in communities, their colleagues and most importantly South Africans with mental health problems gain something positive for themselves from the course. We wish you luck with all your endeavours.

David Richards
Tim Bradshaw
Hilary Mairs
The University of Manchester, UK. November 2003.

Helping People With Mental Illness

Course Outline

There are eight modules in this course. They are:

Module A	What is Mental Illness?
Module A2	Introduction to the Treatment of Mental Health Problems
Module B	Understanding Mental Illness
Module C	Responding to People with Mental Health Problems
Module D	Drug Treatments and Mental Illness
Module E	Helping Families Cope with Mental Health Problems
Module F	Living Well with Mental Health Problems
Module G	Tracing People who Default from Mental Health Services

The course is very flexible. It is not necessary to teach all eight modules. Some modules contain similar material organised in a different way to suit different courses.

Organising a Course

Below are suggestions for three different types of courses:

- 1. A course to introduce people to some basic knowledge about mental illness and how to talk to people who have mental health problems**
 - **Modules A, B and C**
- 2. A course to prepare volunteers to assist medical and nursing staff trace people with mental health problems who have defaulted from their clinic appointments**
 - **Modules A2, C and G**
- 3. A comprehensive course for volunteers who want to work with people with mental illness in the community**
 - **Modules A, B, C, D, E, F**

Each module lasts three or three and a half hours. The instructions are easy to follow and all the materials are included in each pack. Although it is not necessary to take all the modules the ones chosen for any course should be taken in the order above. They can be spaced out over days or weeks or run together over a few days. The materials are designed so that an ordinary person can use them to train other people. You do not have to be an expert to teach this course. However, you should have done the course yourself before you can become a trainer.

Module D

Drug Treatments and Mental Illness

Introduction

- This module introduces some common drug treatments for mental illness, examines the benefits and side effects of drug treatments and how to help people with mental health problems get the most from their drug treatment

Purpose

- Consider the different types of medication that is used to treat mental illness
- Examine what the benefits of these drug treatments are for patients
- Review the negative aspects of drug treatments for patients including common side effects
- Discuss how we can help mentally ill people to get maximum benefit from drug treatments and cope with side effects

Materials

- Slides D1 – D10
- Flip chart or chalkboard
- Flip chart pens or chalk
- Pens and Paper
- Copies of the three case studies
- Handout sheets

Activities

Activity 1:	Introduction	10 minutes
Activity 2:	Drug treatments and Mental Illness	20 minutes
Activity 3:	How drug treatments work	30 minutes
Activity 4:	Negative Aspects of Drug Treatments	50 minutes
Activity 5:	Recognising and Managing problems with Drug Treatments	60 minutes
Activity 6:	What Have We Learnt?	10 minutes

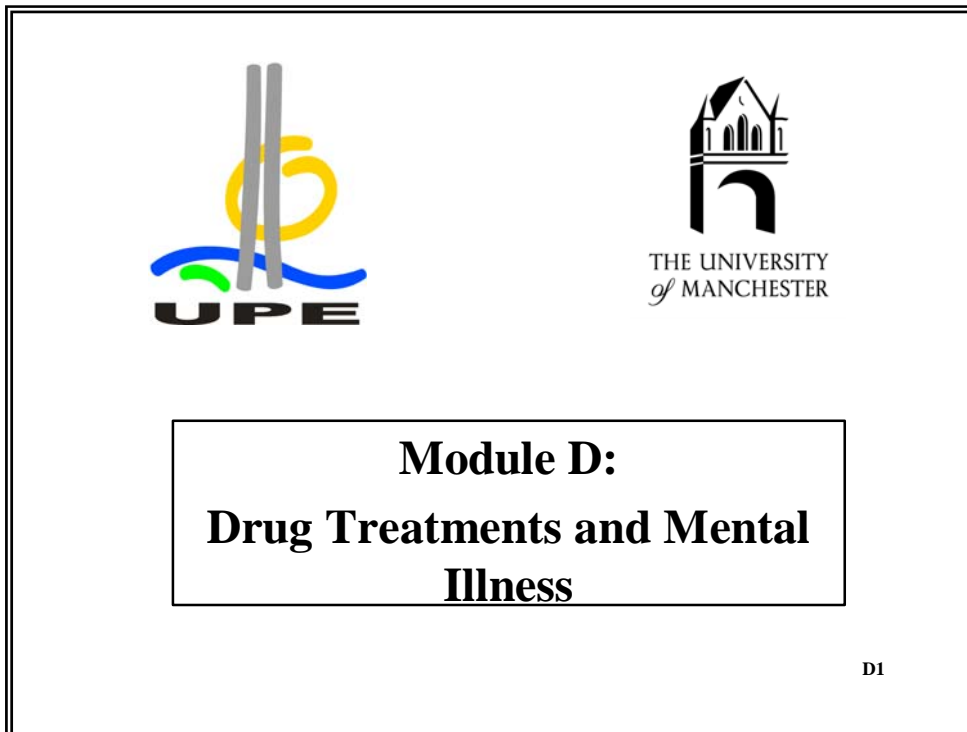
Overall Time Needed

Three hours

Method

- Presentation

Use slide D1 to start the activity.



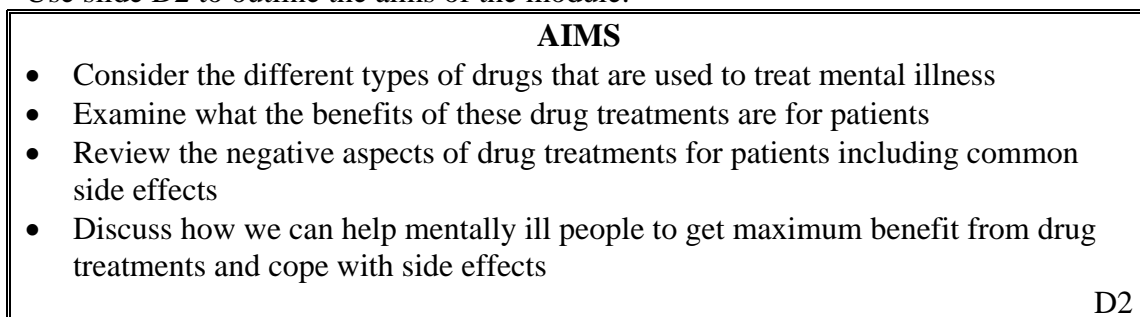
**Module D:
Drug Treatments and Mental
Illness**

D1

Slide D1

Explain that this module is important because many people that suffer from severe and long term mental illness will need to take medication every day over long periods of time. Helping them to take this medication regularly and to manage any side effects that it may cause are important aspects of the help that we provide to mentally ill people.

Use slide D2 to outline the aims of the module:



AIMS

- Consider the different types of drugs that are used to treat mental illness
- Examine what the benefits of these drug treatments are for patients
- Review the negative aspects of drug treatments for patients including common side effects
- Discuss how we can help mentally ill people to get maximum benefit from drug treatments and cope with side effects

D2

Slide D2

Activity 2: Drug treatments and mental illness 20 minutes

Methods

- Presentation
- Large Group Discussion

This activity is used to review the drug treatments commonly used in South Africa for mental illness, to explain how drug treatments work and examine what the benefits and negative aspects of treatment are for people suffering from mental illness.

1. Before introducing slides D3 and D4 encourage discussion by asking the group if they know the names of any drugs that are used to treat mental illness. If the names of any drugs are offered write them on the board and ask the group do they know what type of mental illness the drug is used to treat. Remember to praise any ideas volunteered by group members.

Use slides D3 and D4 to introduce some commonly used drug treatments for mental illness:

Common drug treatments for different types of Mental Illness		
Type of mental illness	Types of drug	Names of commonly used drugs
Bi-polar disorder (manic depression)	Mood stabilisers	Lithium (Priadel) Carbamazepine
Psychosis (Schizophrenia)	Anti-psychotic Neuroleptic Major tranquilliser	Chlorpromazine (Largactil) Haloperidol (Serenace) Thioridazine (Melleril) Flupenthixol (Depixol) Fluphenazine (Modecate)
Drugs used to treat side effects	Stiffness, shaking & muscle spasms Restlessness	Procyclidine (Kemadrin) Benzhexol (Artane) Propranolol

D3

Slide D3

Common drug treatments for different types of Mental Illness

Type of mental illness	Types of drug	Names of commonly used drugs
Anxiety states	Anxiolytic Minor tranquilliser	Diazepam (Valium) Lorazepam (Ativan)
Depression	Anti-depressants	Prothiaden Amytriptiline Prozac Seroxat

D4

Slide D4

2. Encourage discussion by asking the group if they believe drug treatments are helpful for people suffering from mental illness and do they have any ideas why they might be helpful or how they work.

Activity 3: How drug treatments work 30 minutes

Methods

- Presentation
 - Small Group Discussion
1. Ask participants to organise themselves into small groups of about 6 people
 2. Once they have done this ask them to discuss what they see as the benefits of drug treatments.
 3. After 10 minutes go around each group and ask them to call out what they think the benefits of drug treatments are.
 4. Using slide D5 summarise the main benefits.

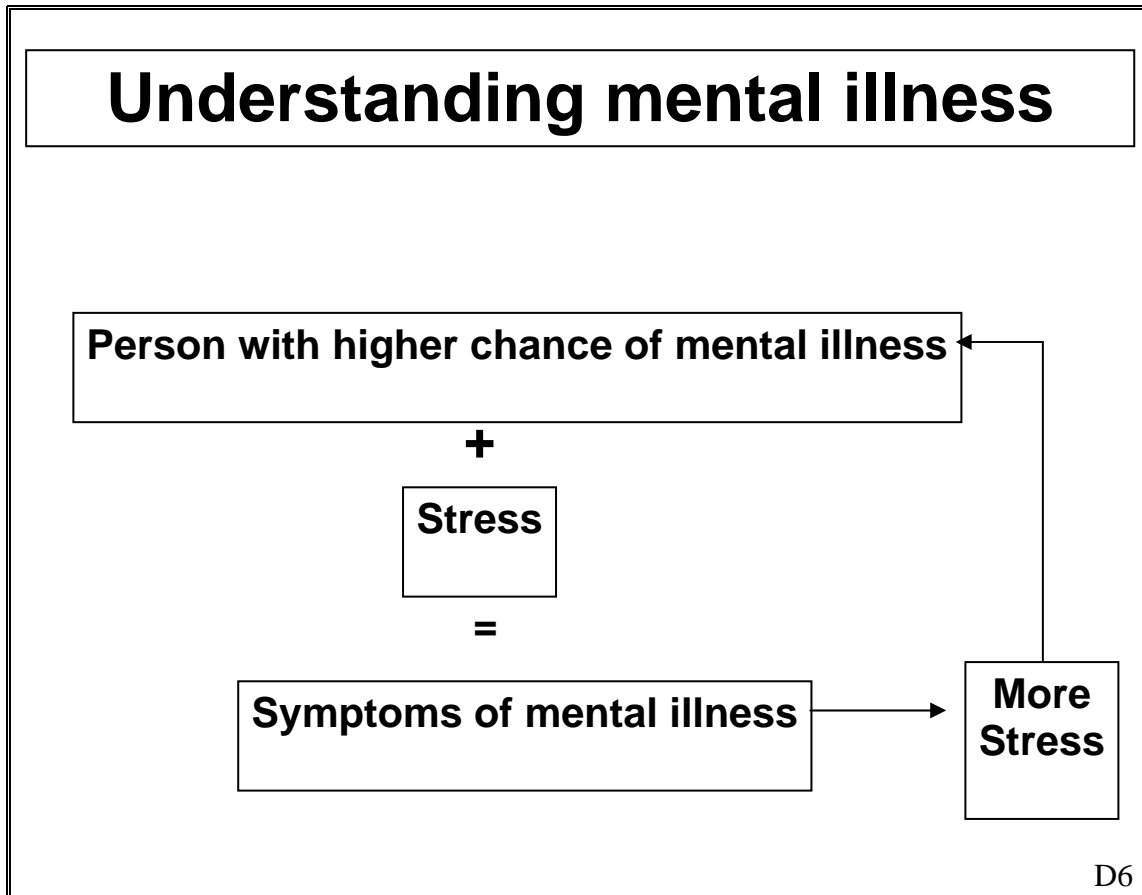
Benefits of drug treatments

- Medication helps to correct abnormal changes in the brain
- In the *acute phase* of the illness drugs stop or reduce the severity of distressing symptoms such as hearing upsetting voices
- Drugs help the patient to return to how they want to be and to be able to function better within their community
- Many patients need to take medication on a long term basis. This helps to stop them becoming ill again because medication protects against stress

D5

Slide D5

5. Use slide D6 to summarise and explain that medication can help protect the patients against the potentially negative effects of stress. This therefore makes it less likely that they will relapse and have further episodes of illness. In the long term this should result in the patient becoming less chronically mentally ill and making a better recovery from the illness.



Slide D6

Activity 4: Negative aspects of Drug Treatments 45 minutes

Method

- Small Group Work
 - Large group discussion
 - Presentation
1. Ask the participants to organise themselves in to groups of about 6 to 8 people.
 2. Ask the groups to come up with as many reasons they can think of why someone might not want to take drugs for treatment of their mental illness. Get the groups to write these down on a piece of paper. Give the groups 10 minutes for this task.
 3. Next, ask the groups to identify any side effects of medication that they know about. Encourage discussion by asking the group if they have observed any particular side effects of drug treatments in people they know who suffer from mental illness. Once again, ask them to record these on a piece of paper and give the group 10 minutes for this task.
 4. Bring the groups together again and ask the groups to feedback to everyone else what they have thought about and written down. The teacher should write a summary of the material on a flip chart or chalk board.
 5. Once the feedback is over, the teacher should explain that despite the many positive aspects of drug treatment for mental illness there are also negative aspects of treatment.
 6. Describe the negative aspects of medication and common side effects by reading through slides D7 – D9.

Negative aspects of drug treatments

- Interference with lifestyle e.g. drinking alcohol
- Remembering to take medication on a long term basis can be difficult
- Many patients experience unpleasant and distressing *side effects*
- In not managed properly side effects can be debilitating and may make the person appear unusual and may increase *stigma* resulting from the illness

D7

Slide D7

Common side effects (1)

- Muscle spasms most commonly of the face and neck
- Restlessness resulting in rocking from foot to foot, walking on the spot or pacing up and down
- Blank facial expression with extremely limited show of emotion
- Muscle stiffness and shakiness particularly of the hands
- Slowed movements, diminished speech and poor motivation for self care

D8

Slide D8

Common side effects (2)

- Tiredness and wanting to sleep all the time
- Sexual problems for both men and women
- Sensitivity to sunlight
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness particularly when standing up
- Over-production of saliva
- Weight gain
- Itchy skin rashes

D9

Slide D9

7. Explain to the group that side effects of medication can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from the symptoms of the illness itself, particularly side effects such as agitation and restlessness and slowed movements and poor motivation. However, it is very important that we help people to manage side effects of medication for the following reasons outlined on slide D10:

Why helping patients to manage side effects is important

- Patients sometimes report that side effects are worse for them than the symptoms of the illness
- Side effects can lead to patients stopping taking the drugs and therefore being more likely to become ill again
- Side effects have a negative effect on the patients quality of life and their ability to function in the community
- Side effects can increase stigma for the patient and thereby make community living more stressful

D10

Slide D10

Module D: Activity 5

Recognising and Managing problems with Drug treatments

Case Studies

Case study D1

Annalie is a 28 year old woman who lives in a rural village near Port Alfred.

Annalie has been suffering from depression for nine months since she was raped by a local man on her way home from church. Her depression is being treated with Prothieden 150mgs once a day which she takes in the morning. This was prescribed 4 months ago by the nurse at the clinic and Annalie sees the nurse once a month to have her treatment reviewed.

Annalie has responded well to this medication and her mood has improved considerably, unfortunately she is experiencing problems with side effects from the medication which include severe tiredness, dizziness and a dry mouth.

These side effects are making it difficult for Annalie to function in her role as a mother and housewife. Her husband has been very critical of what he sees as her “laziness”, he doesn’t think Annalie needs the medication any longer and has told her to stop taking it and pull herself together.

Imagine that you are providing Annalie with support and you are worried that she may stop taking her medication and become ill again. What help could you provide to Annalie to help her to manage the side effects of her medication?

Case study D2

David is a 34 year old man who has a 12 year history of schizophrenia. He lives with his mother and brother in a rural farming community near Storms River.

David's illness was been stable for 3 years during this time he was receiving a monthly injection of Modecate 100mgs from the community sister.

Recently David has been experiencing a lot of stress due to his brother's alcoholism and disruptive behaviour. He started to hear voices again which caused him to become very distressed. The nurse at the clinic has prescribed Haloperidol 20mgs tablets three times a day as well as David continuing to receive the injection.

Since starting the Haloperidol David has stopped hearing the voices and is generally more relaxed. However his muscles are very stiff, he has a mask like facial expression and has been drooling saliva from his mouth.

His mother feels that the new medication has made him worse and wants him to stop taking it.

Imagine that you are providing David with support what help could you provide to David to help him to manage the side effects of his medication.

Case study D3

Thandie is 48 years old she lives with her two daughters aged 16 and 18 years in a bungalow in the KwaZakhele Township outside Port Elizabeth.

Thandie has suffered from epilepsy for 9 years but has also been receiving treatment for depression and psychosis for the past 6 months.

Her current medication is Chlorpromazine 100mgs three times a day, Prothieden 75mgs twice a day and Procyclidine 5mgs three times a day.

When she was ill Thandie had paranoid ideas that her neighbour was trying to have her killed. Thandie responded well to the medication and is happy to take the tablets as they are prescribed. However, she has difficulty remembering to take the tablets and worries about taking too many. As a result of this Thandie can sometimes forget to take some or all of her medication and she has started to think that her neighbour is plotting against her again.

Imagine that you are providing Thandie with support and you are worried that she may be becoming ill again. How could you help Thandie to remember to take her tablets as they are prescribed?

Possible solutions for Case Study D1

- *With Annalie's permission discuss with the nurse about Annalie taking her medication at night rather than in the morning*
- *Discuss with the nurse Annalie having a possible reduction in the dose of her medication*
- *Encourage Annalie to be careful when getting up from a sitting position to avoid falls due to dizziness*
- *Get Annalie to suck sweets or fruit to stimulate saliva production and make her mouth less dry*
- *Educate her husband about her side effects and that it is not laziness, teach him about the importance of support*
- *Discuss with Annalie the advantages and disadvantages of taking medication*

Possible solutions to case study D2

- *With David's permission discuss with the nurse about David being prescribed some Procyclidine to stop the stiffness*
- *Discuss with the nurse David having a possible reduction in the dose of his medication or change to another tablet*
- *Get David to suck travel sickness pills or anything else that will reduce saliva production to stop him drooling*
- *Encourage him to exercise to prevent aches and pains from muscle stiffness*
- *Educate David and his mother about the importance of continuing to take medication particularly due to the stress David is currently under. Reassure them that side effects will not be permanent and will improve once the medication is reduced.*
- *Discuss with David the advantages and disadvantages of taking medication*

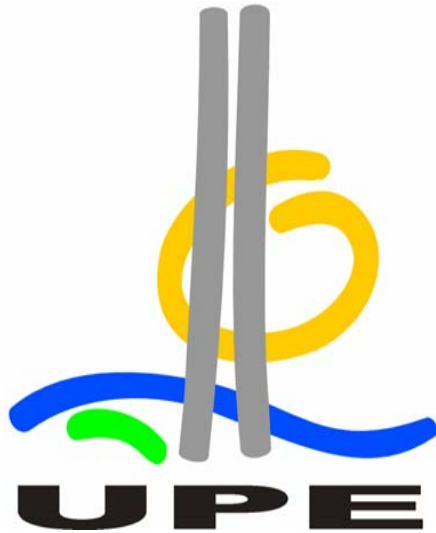
Possible solutions to case study D3

- *Educate Thandie and her daughters about the importance of continuing to take the medication.*
- *With Thandie's permission get one of the daughters to take responsibility for their mother's medication.*
- *Try to build in medication taking with daily routine.*
- *Encourage Thandie to keep a record each time she takes a dose of medication so she knows how much she has taken each day.*
- *Discuss with Thandie the advantages and disadvantages of taking medication.*

Activity 6: What Have We Learnt? 10 minutes

Method

- Large Group Discussion
1. Ask participants to say what they have learned from the whole of module D.
 2. Do not discuss the individual contributions at this stage. Allow individual participants to say whatever they wish about the module.
 3. Write each contribution down on a flipchart or chalkboard.
 4. Summarise the groups suggestions at the end. Feedback what the group have said and end on a positive note.
 5. Take a well earned break.



THE UNIVERSITY
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Module D: Drug Treatments and Mental Illness

Aims of the Module

- **Consider the different types of drugs that are used to treat mental illness**
- **Examine what the benefits of these drug treatments are for patients**
- **Review the negative aspects of drug treatments for patients including common side effects**
- **Discuss how we can help mentally ill people to get maximum benefit from drug treatments and cope with side effects**

Common drug treatments for different types of Mental Illness

<u>Type of mental illness</u>	<u>Types of drug</u>	<u>Names of commonly used drugs</u>
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Common drug treatments for different types of Mental Illness

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Anxiety states	Anxiolytic Minor tranquilliser	Diazepam (Valium) Lorazepam (Ativan)
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Benefits of drug treatments

- Medication helps to correct abnormal changes in the brain
- In the *acute phase* of the illness drugs stop or reduce the severity of symptoms such as hearing upsetting voices
- Drugs help the patient to return to how they want to be and to be able to function better within their community
- Many patients need to take medication on a long term basis this helps to stop them from becoming ill again because they protect against stress

Understanding mental illness

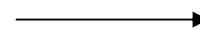
Higher Chance

+

Stress

=

**Symptoms of
mental illness**



**More
stress**



Negative aspects of drug treatments

- Interference with lifestyle e.g. drinking alcohol
- Remembering to take medication on a long term basis can be difficult
- Many patients experience unpleasant *side effects*
- If not managed properly side effects can be debilitating and may make the person appear unusual and may increase *stigma* resulting from the illness

Common side effects (1)

- **Muscle spasms most commonly of the face and neck**
- **Restlessness resulting in rocking from foot to foot, walking on the spot or pacing up and down**
- **Blank facial expression with limited show of emotion**
- **Muscle stiffness and shakiness particularly of the hands**
- **Slowed movements, diminished speech and poor motivation for self care**

Common side effects (2)

- **Tiredness and wanting to sleep all the time**
- **Sexual problems for both men and women**
- **Sensitivity to sunlight**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Dizziness particularly when standing up**
- **Over-production of saliva**
- **Weight gain**
- **Itchy skin rashes**

Why helping patients to manage side effects is important

- **Patients sometimes report that side effects are worse for them than the symptoms of the illness**
- **Side effects can lead to patients stopping taking the drugs and therefore being more likely to become ill again**
- **Side effects have a bad effect on the patients quality of life and their ability to live in the community**
- **Side effects can increase stigma for the patient and thereby make community living more stressful**