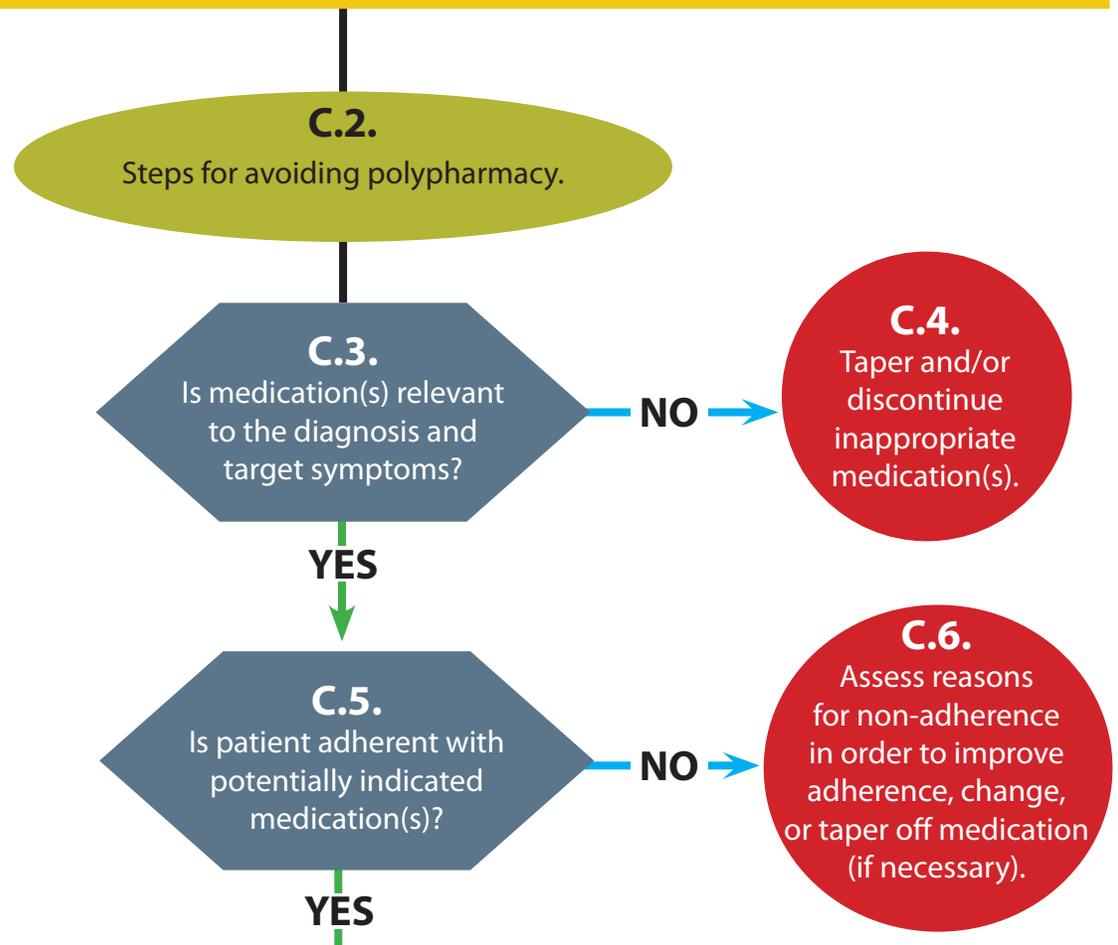
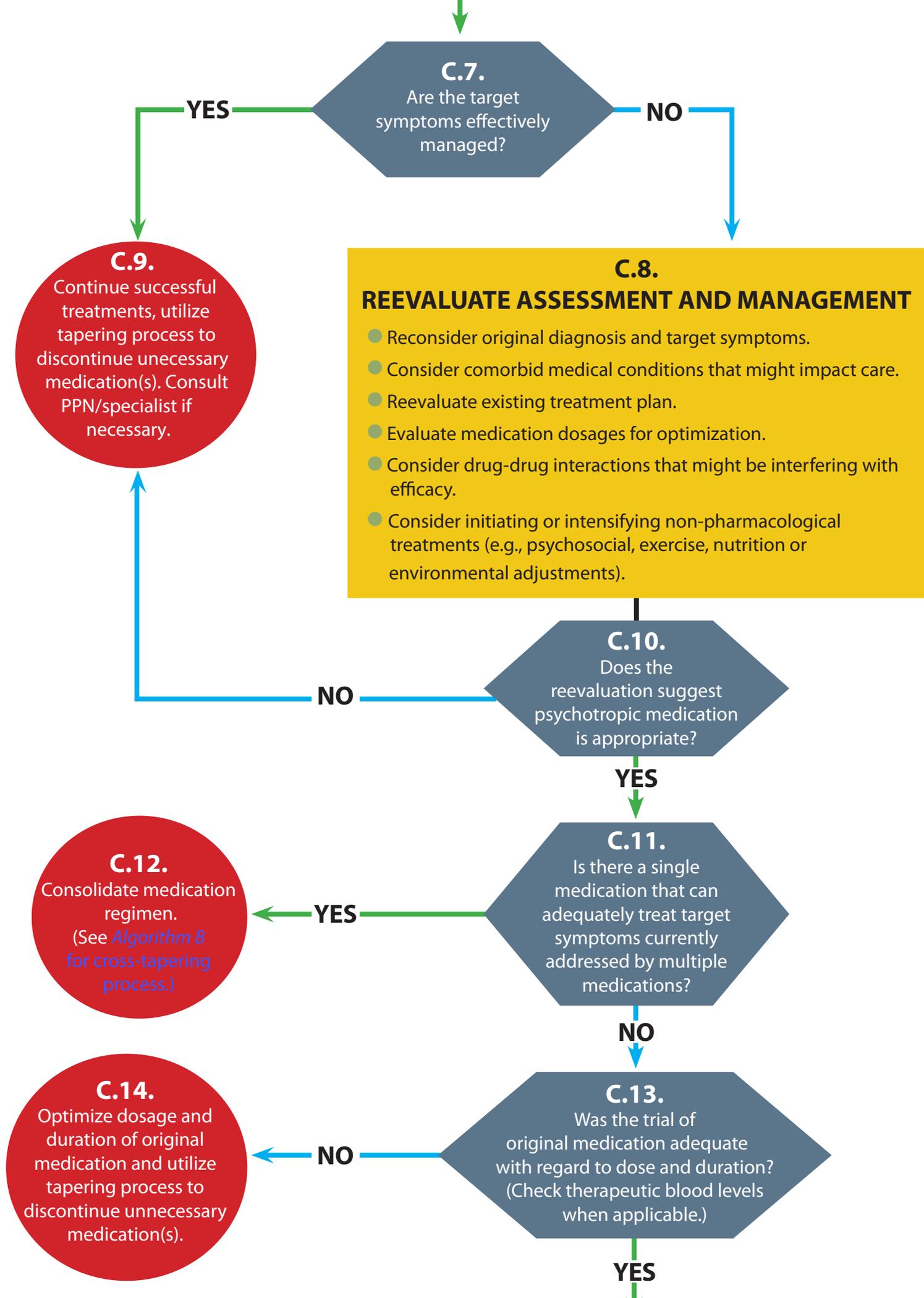


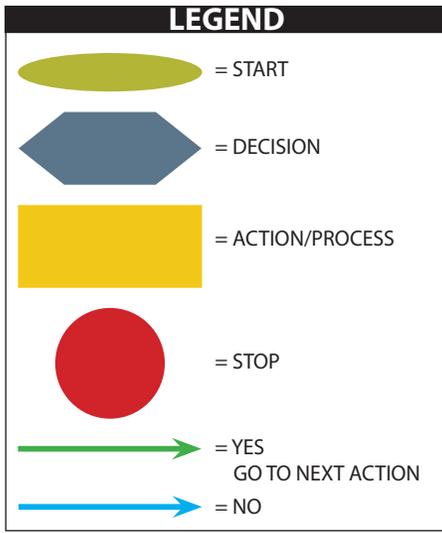
Avoiding Polypharmacy

C.1. PRESCRIBING SAFETY GUIDELINES

- Multiple psychotropic medications or polypharmacy should be avoided whenever possible.
- For some specific circumstances, an optimal medication regimen might involve multiple medications. For example, in a young person with multiple diagnoses or with “treatment-resistant” conditions.
- Anytime you are considering prescribing more than three psychotropic medications, consult PPN/ specialist.
- The potential benefits and risks of psychotropic medication use must be weighed against the risks of untreated illness.
- Caution is recommended in prescribing psychotropic medications to children and adolescents given that their long term consequences are poorly understood.







C.15.

- Use a computer-based interaction program or the *Drug Contraindications & Interaction Tables* to:
 - Identify dangerous combinations.
 - Identify counter-productive combinations.
- Use tapering process to eliminate unnecessary or high-risk pharmacological combinations.
- Refer to *Medication List* and *Evidence-based Treatments Guide*.
- Consult PPN/specialist.

New Patients on Multiple Medications

- Implement Algorithm C.
- Prioritize target symptoms: treat psychosis and mood disorders before considering pharmacological intervention for other symptoms such as inattention.
- Exercise patience by recognizing that all symptoms may not be able to be addressed at once but rather over the course of time.
- Children who have been prescribed multiple psychotropic medications often present complex and unique symptoms that need to be fully considered on a case-by-case basis.
- See *Case Studies* for guidance on how to manage patients on multiple psychotropic medications.
- Consider consulting PPN/specialist.

Questions to Consider

- Is it clear what the target symptoms are?
- Are any of the medications added to augment another?
- Are there any medications that are being used to treat side effects?
- Are any of the medications redundant? If yes, can one be used in place of two?
- What are the expectations for the medication?
- Is there one medication that can treat more than one target symptom or a cluster of symptoms where two or more medications are currently used?