

# TRAINING TOOLKIT

FOR

## OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

### **Overview and Learning Objectives**

Medication can be an effective part of the treatment for several psychiatric disorders of childhood and adolescence. A recommendation to use medication often raises many concerns and questions in the parents and the child. Medicines which have beneficial effects may also have side effects, and at times, the benefit of medicine versus a non-medicine related treatment may be overestimated. On the other hand, many medicines have proven effective in treating life-altering and life-threatening disorders. When prescribed appropriately and taken as prescribed, medication may reduce or eliminate troubling symptoms and improve the daily functioning of children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders.

The *Overview of Mental Health Medications for Children and Adolescents Toolkit* is designed to support improved understanding of the use of medication in the treatment of children and adolescents who have been diagnosed with one or more classes of mental illnesses. The *Toolkit* is available to all of Georgia's child-serving agencies and organizations for use in educating those who serve children and adolescents with severe emotional disorders. Included in the *Toolkit* will be an Overview Training Video to provide an introduction to the use of mental health medications for children and adolescents and to the various types of medications that are used to treat several classes of mental illnesses experienced by children and youth, as well as linkages to other resources for more in-depth information.

This training toolkit is sponsored and funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) as part of the Department's support of *System of Care* in Georgia. A system of care incorporates a broad array of services and supports that is organized into a coordinated network, integrates care planning and management across multiple levels, is culturally and linguistically competent and builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth at service delivery and policy levels

The *Overview of Mental Health Medications for Children and Adolescents* training will enable participants to gain increased understanding of the following topics regarding the use of mental health medications when treating children and adolescents:

1. General pharmacology: What mental health medications do, how they are prescribed, and what questions adults should consider in their use with children and adolescents.
2. Depressive disorders: Medications used to treat depression and the risks and benefits of medication in treating childhood and adolescent depression.
3. Bipolar disorder: Differentiation between bipolar disorder and psychosis, and the benefits and risks of medications used to treat bipolar disorder in children & youth.
4. Anxiety Disorders: Illnesses grouped under anxiety disorders and the common medications used for treatment.
5. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other Disruptive Behavior Disorders (e.g. Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder): Assessment and diagnosis of these illnesses, how medications for ADHD work, and the risk and benefits of medications used to treat disruptive behavior disorders.
6. Medications and Drugs of Abuse: Commonly abused medications and drugs and how they are abused, which ones can be deadly, and signs that might indicate a child is abusing medications/drugs.
7. Miscellaneous drugs used in treating children and adolescents: Medications that might cause symptoms that mimic mental illness and consideration of over-the-counter medications that could be abused and cause harm.