

Table 3 VA Participants’ Perspectives of Barriers and Facilitators Involved in Clinical Decision Making Regarding Benzodiazepine Use in Veterans with PTSD

Barriers

Organizational-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inheriting PTSD patients on chronic benzodiazepines - Lack of leadership support for tapering Veterans off the inappropriate use of benzodiazepines when patients want them - Unclear who is responsible for tapering /discontinuing benzodiazepines (PC vs MH) - Documentation burdens and time pressures
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Provider-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beliefs that some symptoms associated with PTSD (anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation) are best managed by benzodiazepines (and lack of knowledge or acknowledgement of risks and harms) - Beliefs in the need to use benzodiazepines to kick-start patient before they have access to or see the effects of other treatments - Lack of research to support which medications are safe for women of child-bearing age or pregnant women - Lack of awareness (and sometimes access to) effective psychotherapies for PTSD and common comorbid conditions for which benzodiazepines are used (insomnia, anxiety)
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Patient-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient requests for benzodiazepines - Perceived patient stigma regarding anti-depressant medications - Patient perceptions that they may lose disability benefits if they come off medication(s)
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Facilitators

Organizational-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - De-implementation is supported by clinical practice guideline - Colleagues within organization have similar beliefs and consistent practices - Sufficient time and flexibility to discuss safer options - Integrated clinical teams or embedded MH staff
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- Learning forums (journal clubs, peer discussion groups)
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- Provider-level
- Using psychoeducation and discussion of harms
 - Taking time to build trust with patients before and while suggesting tapering
 - Discussing all advantages and disadvantages of all treatment options
 - Using discussions of unwanted symptoms, caused or worsened by benzodiazepines (concentration, memory) to justify tapering or discontinuation to patients
 - Local provider champions who encouraged utilization of best practices
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- Patient-level
- Relationship and rapport
 - Ability to discuss treatment options
 - Engaging in evidence-based treatments and safer medication options
 - Handout materials
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