

A GUIDE TO EXAMINING

AGITATION

Commonly experienced by people diagnosed with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and dementia, depression and anxiety disorders.

WHAT IS AGITATION?

a behavioural syndrome or **set of symptoms** or behaviours

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF AGITATION?

Agitation can be frequent, where some people experience around **three** mild to moderate **episodes** a month¹

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|-------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| uncooperativeness | 1 | 5 | aggressive behaviour |
| inner tension | 2 | 6 | feeling uneasy |
| restlessness | 3 | 7 | short-tempered |
| anxiety | 4 | 8 | talkative |

HOW TO PREVENT AGITATION

Take maintenance **medication**

Act FAST when symptoms start

Seek psychological **therapy**

WHAT PATIENTS CAN DO

- 1 Self-manage symptoms
- 2 Prescribed medication
- 3 Seek peer support
- 4 Find information
- 5 Contact mental health services
- 6 Develop a crisis plan

AVOID:

Drinking alcohol
Taking illegal substances
Smoking

WHAT PROFESSIONALS CAN DO

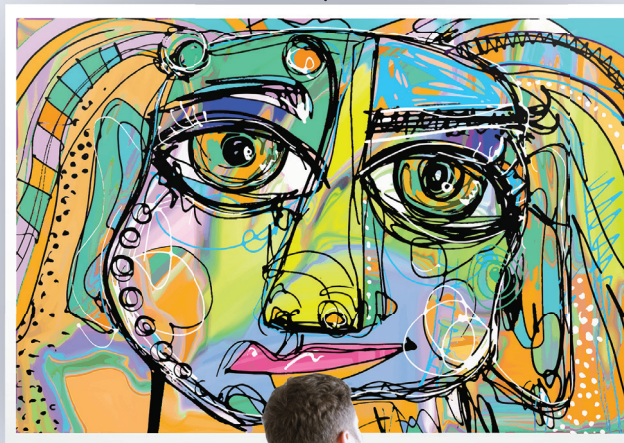
- 1 Use **fast acting**, effective treatments without sedation
- 2 Divert people to mental health services
- 3 Ensure the person's and other people's safety
- 4 Use effective **de-escalation** techniques
- 5 Help the person **manage** their emotions and **distress**

AVOID:

Police custody
Coercive practices, such as seclusion and restraint
Involuntary medication

WHAT CARERS CAN DO

- 1 Recognise **symptoms** early
- 2 Create a quiet and **safe space**
- 3 **Listen** emphatically and offer **reassurance**
- 4 **Avoid** negative comments
- 5 Seek advice and support from **a professional**



¹ Roberts J, Gracia Canales A, Blanthorn-Hazell S, Craciun Boldeanu A and Judge D. Characterizing the experience of agitation in experts by experience with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. BMC Psychiatry (2018) 18:104