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**ASSESS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Is the person improving?

YES

NO

- » Follow-up as needed until symptoms have subsided. ↻
- » Continue maintenance medications for at least 2 years.

SKIP to **STEP 2**

Is the person taking medication?

YES

NO

» If appropriate, initiate medication. 📦

**CLINICAL TIP**

If switching to another medication, begin that medication first and treat with both medications for 2 weeks before tapering off the first medication.



- » Check dosing and side effects. Go to **Table 1** or **Table 3**.
- » Ensure that person has been on a typical effective dose of medication for a **minimum of four to six weeks**.
- » If on typical effective dose of medications for four to six weeks with no improvement, consider switching medication. See **Table 3**.
- » If response is still poor, consult a specialist. 🧑

- » Review psychosocial interventions.
- » Evaluate for medical problems.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON FREQUENCY OF CONTACT**

- » For acute mania: Initial follow-up should be as frequent as possible, even daily, until acute symptoms respond to treatment. Once symptoms respond, monthly to quarterly follow-up is recommended.
- » For persons not currently in manic or depressed states, follow-up at least every three months. Consider more frequent follow up when needed. Monitor closely for relapse.



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## ROUTINELY MONITOR TREATMENT

- » Review and provide psychosocial interventions.
- » If on medication, review **adherence, side effects and dosing**. See **Table 4**.
- » If the person starts any other medications with the potential for drug-drug interactions, consider reviewing the medication dose.


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## DISCONTINUE MEDICATIONS

Has the person been in full remission of symptoms with no episodes of bipolar disorder for *at least two years*?

YES

### » Consider discontinuation of medications

- Discuss with person/carer the risk of discontinuation.
- Consult a specialist regarding the decision to discontinue maintenance treatment after 2 years. 
- Reduce gradually over period of weeks or months.

NO

» Routinely follow up and monitor treatment. 