

Dr. Peter Breggin: "In trying to decide if you have a drug-induced symptom – such as memory problems, slowed thinking, or dulled feelings – your own perception of yourself is the most sensitive instrument there is for detecting when your brain and mind aren't working right. If you sense that a drug is interfering with your normal mental processes, take your perceptions seriously. If the symptoms become worse soon after taking the drug, you may be suffering from a drug toxic effect. If they grow worse when the drug effect is wearing off, you may be suffering from withdrawal symptoms. It can be difficult, of course, to distinguish between drug effects and your own psychological reactions."

On the other hand, psychiatric drugs can confuse your reasoning and judgment, leading you to believe that you are being helped when in fact you are being mentally impaired."

Remade: "Here's the deal. When you take these meds, they do rewire you, significantly. IMO, and from my experience, you are no longer the same person at all, chemically. Some of these comments are blaming the people on the meds, who have left their spouses, but please think about that. This site has @ 5,000 comments and most are about people changing, and leaving their marriages, after these meds. It's not because the people taking them have chosen to leave, it's because their minds have been rewired, and they no longer think like they did before. When I left my husband, I had no insights at all, about the pain I was causing. The meds had made me blind to all that. We shouldn't be blaming the people who took the meds, we should be blaming the meds."

STAGE 1 MEDICATED PARTNER

THE COUPLE

Couple gets together.

STAGE 2

THE MEDICAL VISIT

One individual feels "down". Doc prescribes antidepressant (new or changes dose).

STAGE 3

EXPERIENCES DRUG-INDUCED SYMPTOMS

Medicated Partner may start experiencing drug-induced symptoms – memory problems, slowed thinking, dulled feelings.

STAGE 4

UNUSUAL CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

Medicated Partner begins to exhibit unusual changes in behavior; may include some, but not limited to ...

Poor Judgment	Overspending
Disinhibition	↑ or ↓ in Sex Drive
Overly Irritable	Increased anger
Fast emotional changes	Distancing
Impaired self-awareness	Irrational decisions
Emotional detachment	Emotional numbness
Any Unusual Changes in Behavior	

STAGE 5

PERSONALITY CHANGE & INDIFFERENCE

User begins to behave very differently. Personality changes, Insensitive, Just-not-Caring, no regard for consequences, reduction of both positive & negative emotions. Loss of positive memories related to emotions. May defend drugs as "Not the Problem".

UN-MEDICATED PARTNER

HARM REDUCTION GUIDE TO COMING OFF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS The Icarus Project and Freedom Center

Sometimes people don't realize they are overmedicated, or they have a hard time speaking up or having hope for change. And psychiatric drugs can be very intoxicating, like someone who is so drunk they don't realize they are drunk. If you notice tremors, excessive sleeping, body stiffness, blunted emotions, agitation, severe weight gain, slowness, cognitive impairment, or other possible signs of overmedication, don't just assume the doctor is taking care of it. **Be an active bystander.** Affirm your respect for the person's decisions, but raise the issue gently. Don't judge or jump to conclusions, just stick to what you notice and ask the person if they notice it too. Ask whether they told their prescriber and what the response was. Start a dialogue about the risks and benefits of their medication choices, **and if the person is especially withdrawn or passive, consider approaching friends, family, or any professionals who work with them.** Don't let your own bias and fears get in the way -- you don't know what it is like to be them -- but do become involved, and make sure what you observe is communicated clearly. It can take people time to make real changes, but "choice" shouldn't become an excuse for neglect. Help the person get support to speak up, and remind them they have options.

MAY NOT NOTICE A CHANGE

Un-Medicated partner may not observe anything unusual.

CONCERNED & CONFUSED

Un-Medicated partner starts to notice changes in behavior. May ask if everything is okay. May inquire about the meds. If partner observes any unusual behaviors, these are red flags. **Excerpt from the FDA Full Prescribing Info of all Antidepressants:** "Families & caregivers of patients should be advised to look for the emergence of such symptoms on a day-to-day basis, since changes may be abrupt. Such symptoms should be reported to the patient's prescriber or health professional. Such monitoring should include daily observation by families and caregivers."

MARIE: "I came across this forum searching for links. It was like a light had suddenly come on in my head, and it was a relief to discover that I was not alone dealing with this. I felt so stupid for taking so long to figure out the connection - now it seems so obvious! It was gutting when the doctor refused to even consider my concerns and discussions."

SHOCK

Un-Medicated partner probably doesn't understand what is going on or how to react. Does not recognize the person they are talking to or how to interact with them.

LostConfused: "I was shocked. I was in denial. Still am. He didn't even really care to be my friend ... I am in agony everyday and he lives on happy as can be without caring about my existence ... I want my best friend back."

← TIME

ALLISON: "I almost feel (and this sounds really strange) like I don't really care what happens to me one way or the other. I started not really feeling anything for my partner. I was fond of him but did not feel romantically inclined towards him. I am completely numb towards him. something's just "missing," something "isn't right," and no, "I don't know why". I sometimes feel like I wouldn't care if I ever saw him again even though he is probably the kindest person I've ever met. Here's the thing: I barely think of him. I know he is devastated and suffering and while on an intellectual level I care, I don't feel anything about it really. The thing is, I don't want to be with anyone. Nothing excites me."

THEREALME: "IT ISN'T YOU! IT ISN'T THEM! If you have someone in your life that has suddenly gone crazy because of SSRIs – rest assured they do not realize it! The ONLY reason I am not still under the influence of this stupid drug is because when I realized I no longer wanted the children I had spent 7 years on my knees begging God for, I handed the reins to my husband. I realized I could not trust my own judgment. I asked my husband to fix it. I didn't know what to do. The first thing he did was to make me an appointment with a doctor to get me off of celexa. As soon as the drugs started leaving my system my mind began to clear. I began coming back."

LOLIPOPSANDCRISPS: "I felt fine ... I thought my brain was somehow above the drug ... I just didn't care anymore ... Perhaps the most horrifying thing is that had someone told me these effects were taking place while I was on the drug, I would have shrugged it off. I think this is precisely why antidepressants can be so destructive to significant relationships."

KELLY: "My girlfriend supported me about it from the start but after one month of Prozac I didn't want her around.. i didn't like feeling that way but i didn't feel the same way about her anymore.... it was the best relationship in my life but i didn't love her at all. my doctor told me it was because of the meds but i didn't believe him. i broke up with her after two months of treatment since i didn't want to be with her anymore and that didn't bother me either. my doctor told me to stop taking the drugs after seven months.... and in less than a week i missed her again... its the worst thing i ever did..."

STAGE 6 MEDICATED PARTNER

DIFFERENT PERSON. DRIVEN TO LEAVE
 Medicated partner often communicates "I love you but I am not in love with you." Frequently compelled to leave the relationship. Emotionally detached. **Personality change evident, but may only be recognized by those close to them like partner, children, intimate friends.** Some compare this to being zombie-like; alien; body-snatcher; soul-less; "maddeningly rational".

STAGE 7 THIS IS NOT YOUR LOVED ONE!
 Medicated Partner may file for divorce or end the relationship. They feel with all of their heart and soul they are in control of their feelings and finally doing what they want in their life. **Do not realize that the thing that changed was the delicate balance in their brain caused by the drug.**

STAGE 8 WHAT HAVE I DONE?
 As time has passed, drugs may begin to wear off for medicated partner. The new activities begin to tarnish; lose their shine. May have healed a bit. This new life no longer seems to make as much sense as it used to. **Some of the old feelings that were blocked may sneak back in as old personality starts to come back.**

UN-MEDICATED PARTNER

DESPERATELY FIGHTING FOR PARTNER
 Un-Medicating partner desperate to keep relationship together; fights for health of their loved one. Tries to compel via logic, emotion, family support, doctors, friends, scientific info. Frequently nothing will work.

DISTRAUGHT & CONFUSED
 Un-Medicating partner may feel depressed or in shock as a result of experience. May say, "It's like my loved one died." They may have struggled finding support or understanding for what they are going through, even from family, friends, medical doctors or therapists. Few understand this. They may feel very alone. Appear frazzled. Many partners report they suffer symptoms or receive a diagnosis of Psychological Shock and / or PTSD.

HEALING
 Un-Medicating partner may have done some healing. They may or may not be able to get past and/or trust the medicated partner for all that has happened.

BMAMACK: The effects of the personality change were swift and harsh and the damage done. The pain has been worse than anything I could have imagined, especially the emotional damage done to my son. My wife threw 22 good years of marriage away in two days time. This drug is killing families. This drug made my wife into a **emotionless zombie** full of hate; she feels no remorse nor does she even acknowledge her actions.

POPPY27: These pills are lethal. I have just experienced the same thing. My Boyfriend and I got married in July this year and 9 days after the wedding he walked out on me and said he didn't love me. He has been on citalopram for 12 months and says he feels better than ever. He shows no emotions anymore and he is normally a very caring person. In fact he almost feels he has done nothing wrong.

ANGEL: After 2 years I had to say good bye to my boyfriend. He went on paxil and quickly became cold. He cut down from 40mg to 20 and was a little better and seemed happy. Then he went up some days to 80mg. It was as though a light blew out in him. He was the sweetest, most lovable passionate man I ever knew. All that went away. He lost all empathy and he became mean. He was never mean! I am in a daze from heart ache. He is oblivious to how he is now and there was no talking to him, there is no one home anymore. **It is as though his spirit left. Blank eyes.** I can't sleep at night, my mind is racing and heart is hurting. I have giving up on ever seeing him again. The man I knew died.

← TIME

STAGE 9

MEDICATED PARTNER MAKES A CHOICE TO ...

couple split up



couple together

STAY FULLY MEDICATED

Potentially serious adverse events may persist or ensue later. Adverse effects, mostly dose-dependent, will appear in up to 75% of patients on normal doses.

1. Gastrointestinal (nausea, vomiting, GI bleed)
2. Hepatotoxicity & hypersensitivity reactions (dermatologic and vascular manifestations)
3. Weight gain and metabolic abnormalities
4. Cardiovascular (QT interval prolongation, basal heart rate and HRV, hypertension, orthostatic hypotension)
5. Genitourinary (urinary retention, incontinence)
6. Sexual dysfunction
7. Hyponatremia
8. Osteoporosis and fractures
9. Bleeding
10. Central nervous system (seizure threshold, extrapyramidal side effects, serotonin syndrome, headache, stroke, cognitive disturbances)
11. Sweating
12. Sleep disturbances
13. Affective (apathy, switching into hypomania or mania, paradoxical effects)
14. Suicidality
15. Safety in overdose
16. Discontinuation syndromes
17. Ophthalmic (glaucoma, cataract)
18. Hyperprolactinemia
19. Risks during pregnancy and breast feeding
20. Risk of malignancies

<https://www.karger.com/Article/Fulltext/447034>

OR

TAPER & HEAL

Medicated partner tries to taper off antidepressant. Will experience massive withdrawal + shame & guilt. May be tormented with intense romantic feelings for partner, & regrets breakup of relationship. **Very painful time mentally & physically.**

- "Lost" without their significant others.
- Daily struggles with the guilt of what they did while they were medicated.
- **Most likely severely suffering from withdrawal symptoms**

MOVING ON

Un-Medicated partner will move on alone or choose a new partner.

find support on successful tapering techniques and easing withdrawal symptoms at survivingantidepressants.org

DENISE: *I cheated numerous times, and couldn't tell you why, and all the sudden one day I packed my stuff and up and walked out the door on my husband and my two beautiful children, who still don't have much to do with me now. IT RUINED MY LIFE, AND THERE'S NO FIXING IT! I am so very sorry for the things I did, and am still told to this day things I said and did, that I have absolutely no recollection of.*

EMILE: *I lost my soulmate because of this piece of s*** drug. I was on ciprolex for 1 1/2 years. My poor baby went through so much s*** because of me, I used to yell at her and not give a s*** about the repercussions. I've been off of it for 4 weeks and I can feel again. But I lost her. And now my world is empty. I am nothing without her.*

← TIME

MEDICATED PARTNER

TAPER & HEAL

Medicated partner tries to taper antidepressant. Will experience massive withdrawal. Will experience massive shame, guilt; fight to regain trust with partner. **Very painful time mentally & physically.**

- Daily struggles with the guilt of what they did while they were medicated.
- **Most likely severely suffering from withdrawal symptoms**

NATALIE: *In the last few months of taking Lexapro I decided that I no longer loved my husband and asked for a divorce. He was shattered. I felt nothing. Even when I realized that our son had heard me say this, I still felt nothing. It was a very difficult drug to wean off but I managed to do it with my husband's support. Now, two years later I am completely "normal" again and have reverted back to my original personality. When I look back at those two years now I can't believe how patient my family was and how scary it must have been for them. I was never told that these side effects would be so devastating. Unfortunately when you are in the situation it is much like being in a storm cloud - you don't realize that you are in the storm until you stop taking it and can "step out" of the situation and see it in hindsight. I sincerely hope that the makers of Lexapro can begin to be more upfront about these side effects.*

UN-MEDICATED PARTNER

SUPPORT & HEAL

Un-Medicated partner will support and help partner through withdrawal symptoms. Will work on healing, mending relationship, re-establishing trust.

GEORGE: *"I've been through what you've been through and I know it's hard. My wife is now off Effexor and we actually made it work. Believe me when I tell you that your husband is not the person making these bad decisions and hurting you and your kids. He has absolutely nothing to do with it. It's just the Effexor. "He" is not the person that is making the choice to keep taking the pills. He doesn't think logically because people that are on Effexor only care about themselves. This is not your husband. These are people who cheat without any remorse. He doesn't care about what other people want and need. I know it sucks but you can't get mad at him (the real him) for what's going on...you know that it's not really him. My wife got off these drugs and got back with me ONLY because she wanted to. The months and months of me going through hell and begging her to stop acting like a maniac did absolutely nothing. I know it takes everything out of you to see your loved one change into a heartless, emotionless person but you'll see that, once your husband gets off this poison, he'll be himself again and he'll apologize for all of this and he will feel terrible. I was like you in the way that I told myself I was done taking all the abuse and done putting up with it and that it's her loss but what kept me in the relationship (if you can even call it that during that time) is that I knew deep down that that person was not my wife. I've so happy now that I waited and put up with all that crap. She is her old self back and I love her more than ever. Hang in there and don't forget that that person is NOT the man you married and had children with. I had a very hard time distinguishing the two for a long time."*