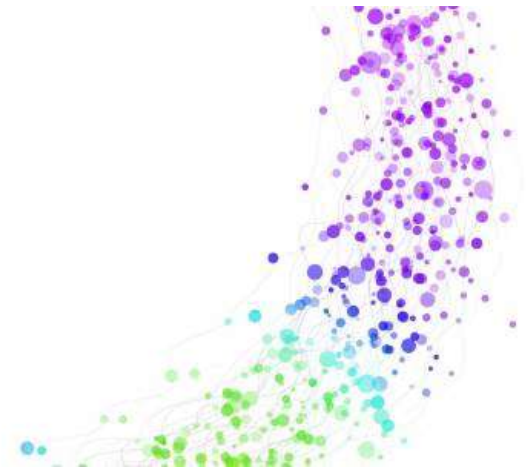


The Gentle Art of Deprescribing

Dr Rani Bora

Holistic Psychiatrist & Life Coach



A photograph of Michelangelo's marble sculpture of David. The sculpture is shown from the chest up, with David's right hand resting on his chin in a contemplative pose. He has curly hair and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a dark, paneled wall.

Michelangelo's perspective

Mental Wealth



Mental Wealth

OUR INFINITE POTENTIAL

minus

The unhelpful thinking, beliefs and our false identities that try to mask it.



Key to successful deprescribing

Awareness of our true mental health – our mental wealth.

The Problem with Psychotropic Prescribing



Driving without knowing how to STOP 🚗



Deprescribing



Current Evidence & Guidance



NICE Guidelines

*“Discontinuation symptoms are usually mild and self-limiting over about one week, but can be severe, particularly if the drug is stopped abruptly.” (NICE, CG90, **2009**)*

NICE, 29 June 2022 UPDATE:

- withdrawal symptoms can be mild, may appear within a few days of reducing or stopping antidepressant medication, and usually go away within 1 to 2 weeks
- withdrawal **can sometimes be more difficult**, with symptoms lasting longer (in some cases several weeks, and occasionally several months)
- withdrawal symptoms **can sometimes be severe**, particularly if the antidepressant medication is stopped suddenly.

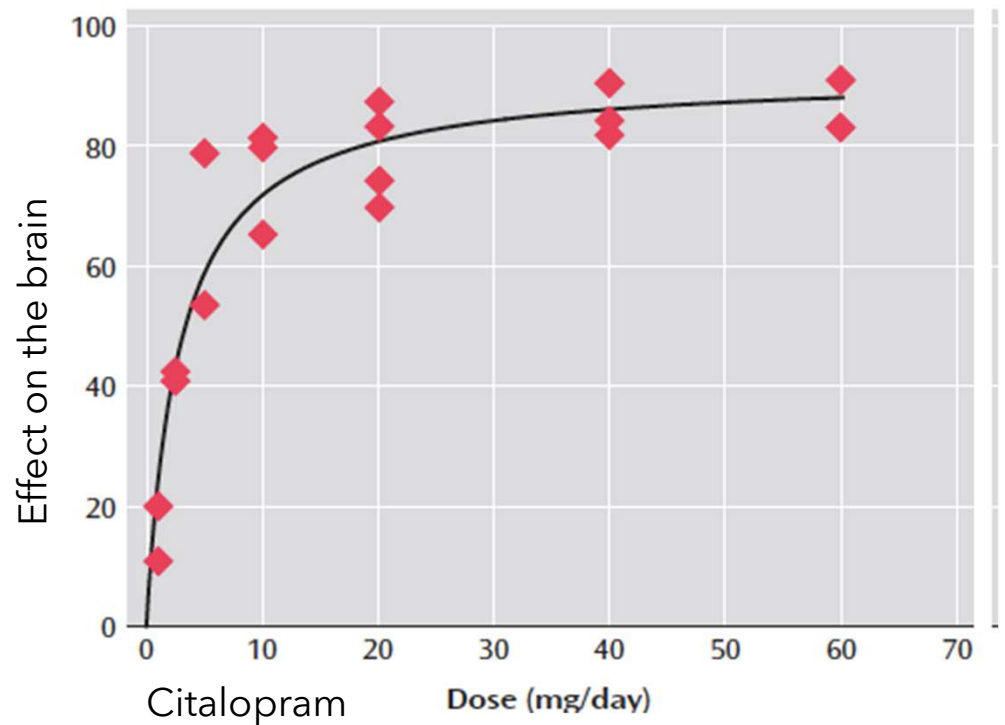


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Linear & Hyperbolic Tapering

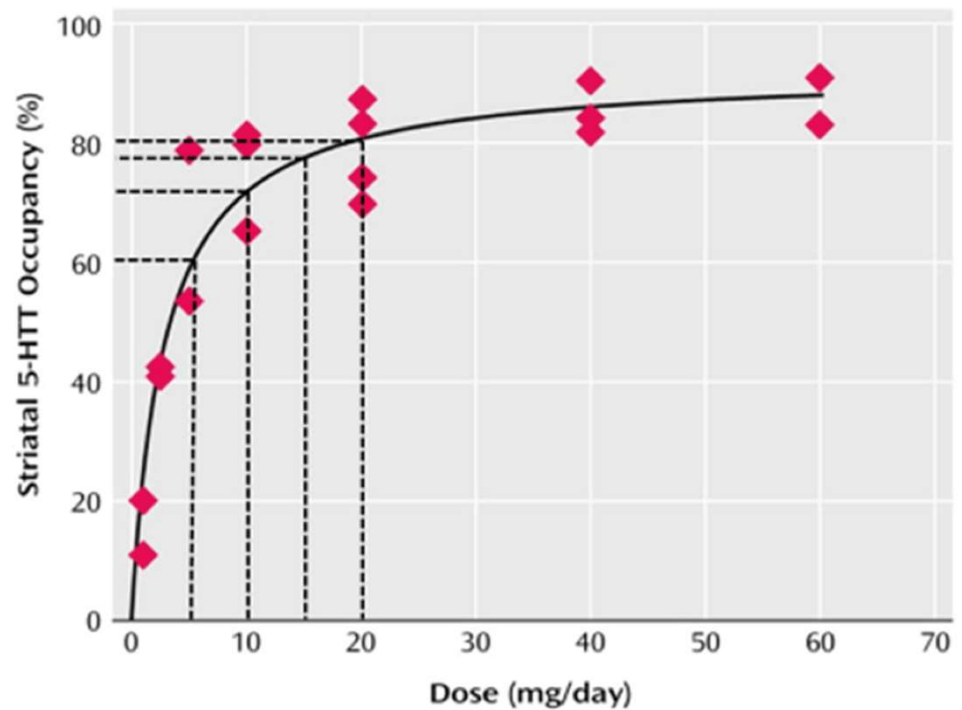
Management of the antidepressant withdrawal syndrome

- Brain imaging (PET) data of antidepressant action to develop rational tapering guidance for antidepressants
- e.g., Citalopram's effect on the serotonin transporter, its major target



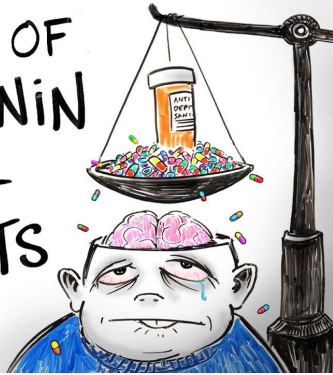
Linear Tapering

- Citalopram linear taper
- 20mg to 15mg -> 3% change
- 15mg to 10mg -> 6% change
- 10mg to 5mg -> 13% change
- 5mg to 0mg -> 58% change
- This correspond to the increasingly severe withdrawal symptoms reported by patients as dose gets lower

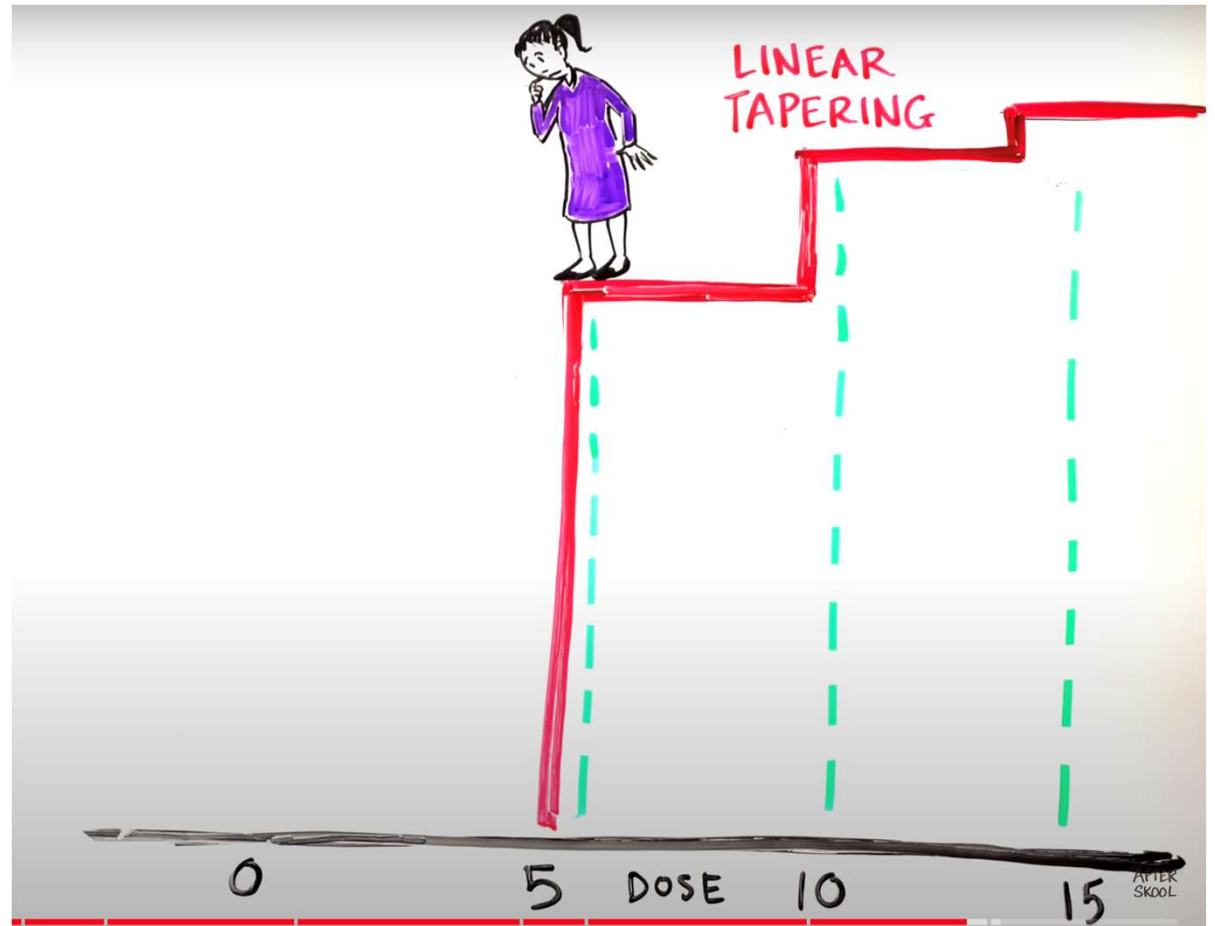


THE MYTH OF LOW-SEROTONIN & ANTI- DEPRESSANTS

by
DR. MARK HOROWITZ

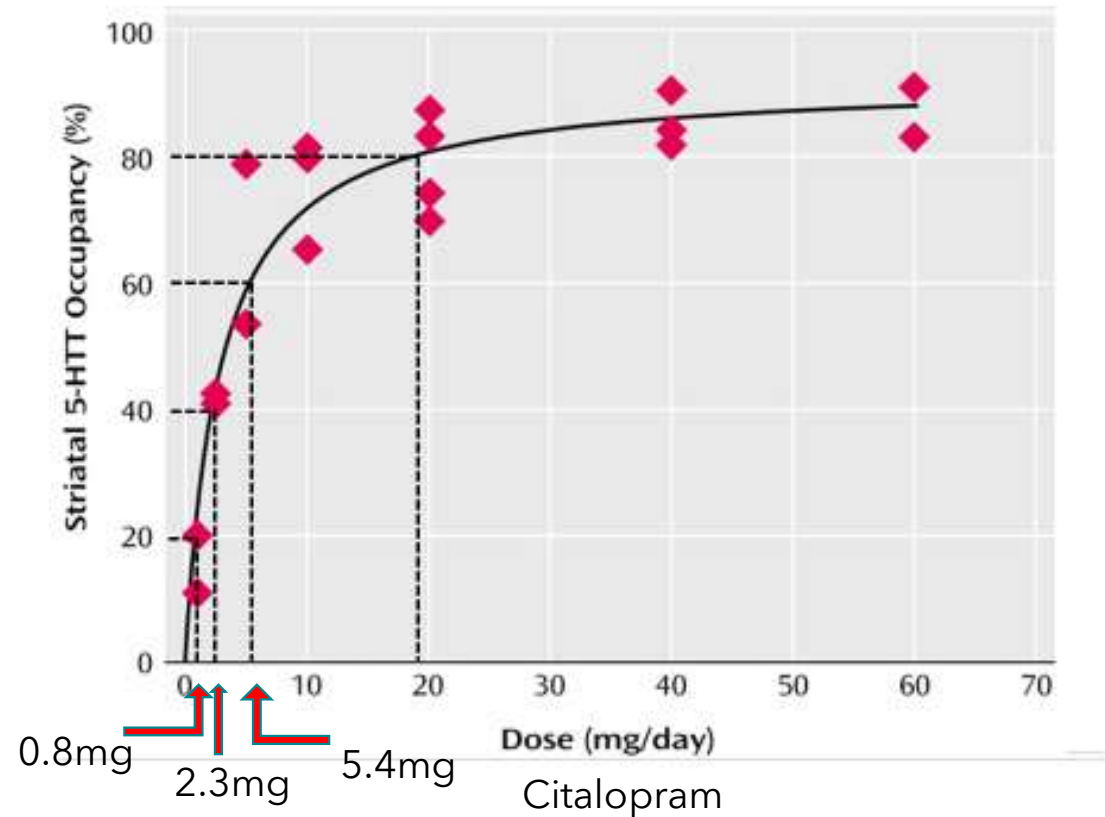


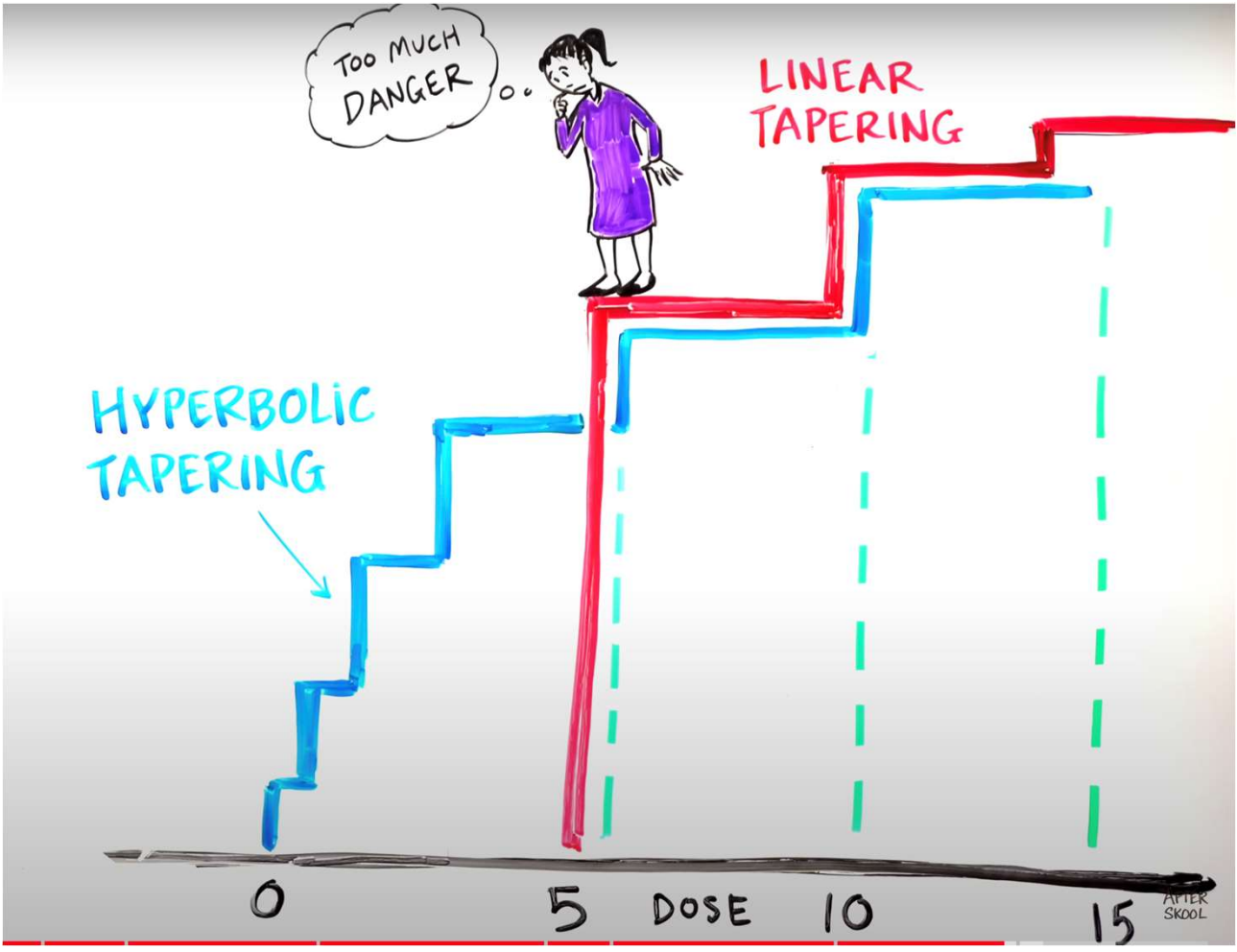
@AfterSkool



Hyperbolic Tapering

- Tapering according to equal change in effects at the serotonin transporter
- Yields hyperbolically reducing regimen
- Final dose before stopping will need to be very small

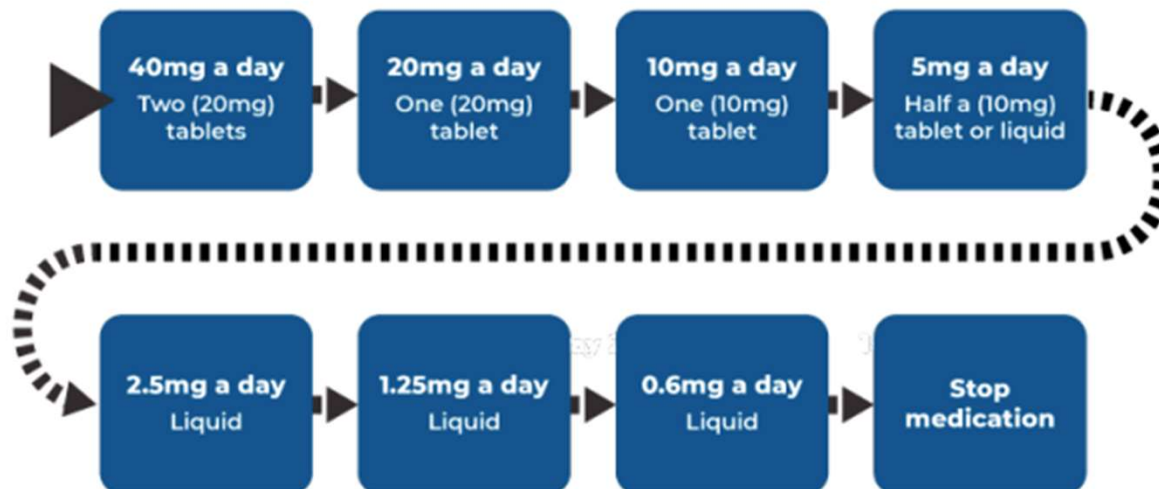




A rapid reduction schedule [RCPsych, 2020]

Citalopram

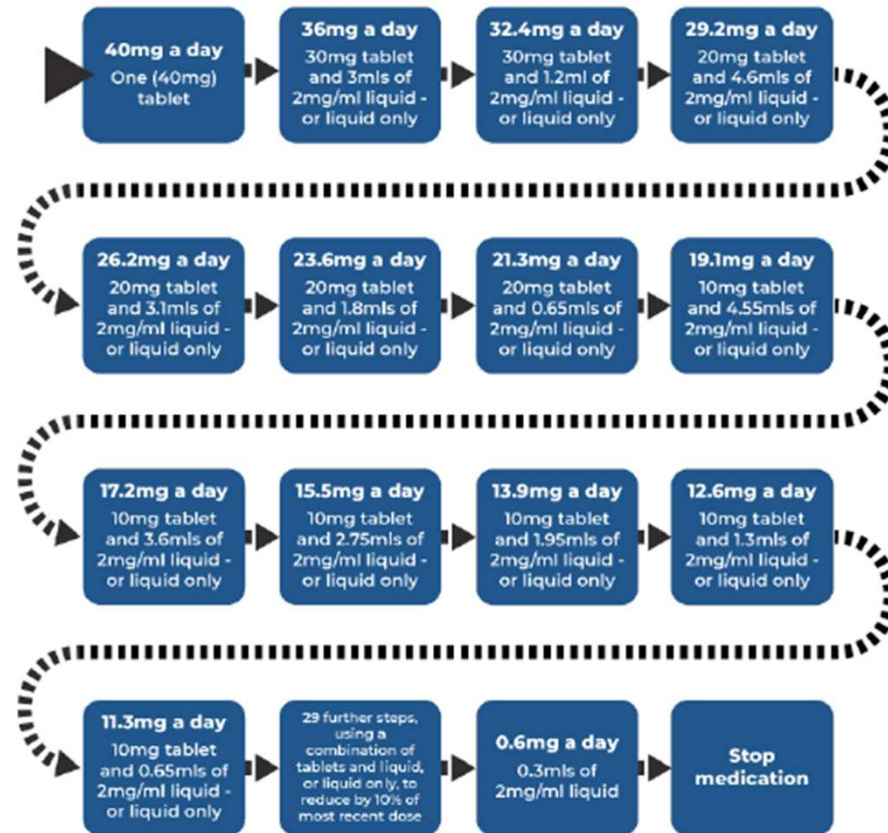
Reduction of dose by 50%, every 2-4 weeks. Some people may need to reduce more slowly.



Total time required: 3-6 months

Paroxetine

Reduction by 10% of the last dose, every 2-4 weeks using tablets and liquid. Some people may need to reduce more slowly. (Updated October 2020)



- Reduce dose by 10% of the dose every 2-4 weeks
- Calculated on the last dose, so that the reductions get smaller and smaller as the total dose decreases
- Reduce down to 0.6mg before stopping
- Approximate duration: 2-3 years

Withdrawal Symptoms

F – flu-like symptoms,

I – insomnia, vivid dreams, nightmares

N – nausea

I – imbalance (including dizziness), and inner restlessness or inability to stay still

S – sensory disturbances like paraesthesia

H – hyperarousal, agitation, irritability, rapidly changing moods

E – electric-shock-like-symptoms, brain zaps

S – suicidal thoughts

Anxiety, panic attacks, and low mood often accompany these symptoms.

Story of Sarah





Christopher Wg42 comment

https://www.youtube.com/attribution_link?a=j5sNckLupfg9Z0fi&u=/



The *shocking* ignorance about Antidepressant Withdrawal Syndrome



Christopher Wg42

Yes I went to multiple doctors who told me it was all in my head! I was suffering greatly the paxel I was on for over a decade stopped working and I was having major withdrawals. It took me a year to get off. I would literally shave off part of the pill with a razor blade and slowly decrease everyday. I develop some type of major hyper sensitivity to ssris. This is what made me realize that doctors do not have a clue! Ssrri I believe can be really beneficial in the short-term last resort after you tried natural alternatives. But the tendency is to use it as a crutch.

Tools to Taper

- Pill cutters
- Digital scales like jeweller's scales
- Liquid preparation
- Water tapering
- Bead counting
- Tapering strips

Linda's story – from 160 to 3 beads

- Diagnosis of GAD and panic disorder 20 years +
- Meds ++
- Severe withdrawal symptoms when Duloxetine dose reduced from 60mg to 30mg daily.
- Started tapering by counting beads and reducing by 10% every 2-4 weeks
- Now she is on the least amount of meds in over 20 years and feels better than ever before.
- I know that how I feel will pass. You have to be prepared to play the long game.
- Exploration of mental wealth

Richard's story – feeding wild birds

- Diagnosis of mixed anxiety and depression
- Venlafaxine + Mirtazapine + Quetiapine + Pregabalin + Diazepam + physical health meds
- Chronic low mood, anxiety +
- Poor QOL
- Tapering off medication gradually
- Exploration of mental wealth
- Feeling pleasure for the first time in years
- f you'd have ever told me that I would ever feed wild birds and take pleasure doing so, I'd have laughed at your face.

Common root cause

Chronic **STRESS**



One ultimate solution

Experiencing **peace of
mind**



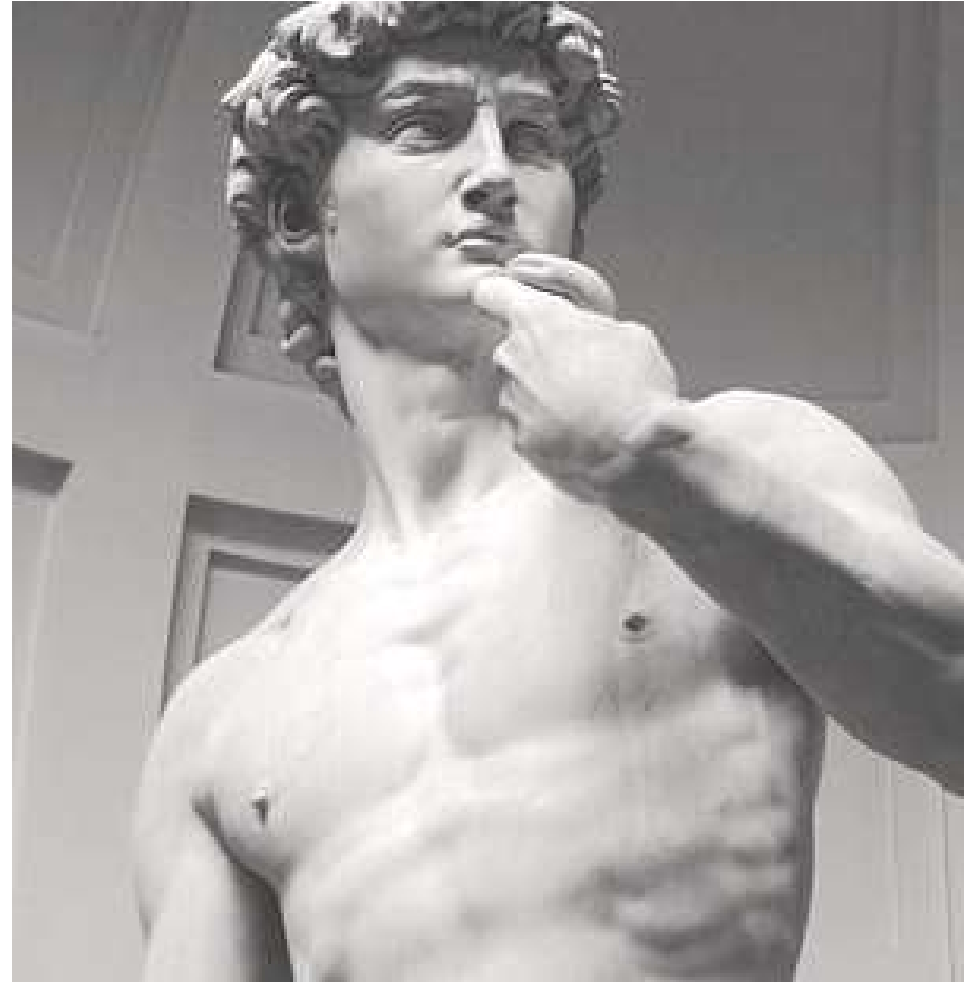
Key takeaway

Deprescribing is more than just a reduction of medication. It is a journey of rediscovering one's mental wealth.

Remember 'FINISHES' to distinguish between withdrawal and relapse.

Instead of linear tapering switch to **hyperbolic tapering** to guide your clients to taper safely.

**Striving to
see what's
within**



References

- Horowitz, M.A. and Taylor, D. (2019) 'Tapering of SSRI treatment to mitigate withdrawal symptoms', *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(6), pp. 538-546. doi:10.1016/s2215-0366(19)30032-x.
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- *Stopping antidepressants: Royal College of Psychiatrists (2020) www.rcpsych.ac.uk.* Available at: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/stopping-antidepressants>.
- *Never broken: Nothing lacking (no date) Dr. Bill Pettit.* Available at: <https://drbillpettit.com/>.

Thank you!

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