

KEY TERMS for Depressive Disorders

Anergia: Reduction in or lack of energy.

Anhedonia: An inability to find meaning or pleasure in existence.

Atypical antidepressants: A classification of more recently released antidepressants with a low lethality risk in suicide attempts

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT): An effective treatment for depression in which a grand mal seizure is induced by passing an electrical current through electrodes that are applied to the temples. Thought to work by affecting neurotransmitters and neuroreceptors. The administration of a muscle relaxant minimizes seizure activity and prevents damage to long bones and cervical vertebrae.

Hypersomnia: The spending of increased time in sleep once asleep, possibly to escape from painful feelings; however, the increased sleep is not experienced as restful or refreshing.

Light Therapy: Full spectrum wavelength light used to treat seasonal affective disorder, thought to be effective due to influence of light on melatonin.

Mood: A pervasive and sustained emotion that, when extreme, can markedly color the way the individual perceives the world.

Persistent depressive disorder: A mild to moderate mood disturbance characterized by chronic depression syndrome that is usually present for at least 2 years; onset early childhood and teenage years, or in adulthood after severe stress.

Psychomotor agitation: Patient may constantly pace, bite their nails, smoke, tap their fingers, or engage in some other tension-relieving activity.

Psychomotor retardation: Slowed and difficult movements

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs): First-line antidepressants that block the reuptake of serotonin, permitting serotonin to act for an extended period at the synaptic binding sites in the brain.

St. John's wort: An herb that may be used to treat mild depression and is not regulated by the FDA.

Tricyclic antidepressants: Drugs that inhibit the reuptake of norepinephrine and serotonin by the presynaptic neurons in the CNS, increasing the amount of time norepinephrine and serotonin are available to the postsynaptic receptors.