

**Mental Health Nursing
Class Preparation
Antidepressant Therapy**

Directions: Please fill in the blanks and answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What is the mechanism by which antidepressant medications achieve their desired effect (regardless of the different physiological processes by which this action is accomplished)?

Antidepressant medications achieve their desired effect through the action of certain neurotransmitters (chemical messengers in the brain) such as norepinephrine, serotonin, and dopamine. When there is an increase in these neurotransmitters, mood should also positively increase.

2. For what must a nurse be on the alert with a client who is receiving antidepressant medication?

If a client is receiving any antidepressant medications, the nurse should always be on alert for suicidal or homicidal ideation along with risk for seizures leading to possible coma and death.

3. When should a nurse expect a client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy?

The client should show signs of symptomatic relief after around 2-4 weeks of initiation of antidepressant therapy.

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: Amitriptyline

Give an example of an MAOI: Phenelzine

Give an example of an SSRI: Fluoxetine

5. Describe some common side effects and nursing implications for tricyclic antidepressants.

Common side effects of tricyclic antidepressants include anticholinergic effects such as dry mouth, blurred vision, urine retention, constipation, and tachycardia. A nurse should monitor for these side effects, watch VS frequently, and make sure the right dose is being given.

6. Hypertensive Crisis is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert include:

The symptoms a nurse should be on the lookout for is increased BP, increased HR, headache, and N/V. You must treat these symptoms individually.

7. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring?

To prevent these symptoms from happening, patients must avoid foods rich in tyramine. Some examples of these foods include those that are fermented or aged.