

**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 by increasing the transmission of certain neurotransmitters given the antidepressant medication.

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

The nurse should be on alert for suicidal ideations or suicidal thoughts when a patient is receiving antidepressant medication.

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

The nurse should expect the client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief around 8 weeks after the initiation of antidepressant therapy.

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: amitriptyline

Give an example of an MAOI: isocarboxazid

Give an example of an SSRI: fluoxetine

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

Tricyclic antidepressants may cause anticholinergic effects including dry mouth, blurred vision, tachycardia, constipation, urinary retention, dizziness, and hypotension. For this client, the nurse should be most aware of urinary retention. They should perform bladder scans and straight cath clients PRN. Due to the high fatality rate for overdoses on this medication, the nurse should recommend the prescription of smaller doses and amounts for patients at greater risk for suicide.

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

Extreme hypertension, headache, altered LOC, SOB, chest pain, headache, vision alterations, and vomiting.

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

Education on the avoidance of foods containing tyramines and not taking Pseudoephedrine when taking MAOI's is most important to prevent these symptoms from occurring. Foods that contain tyramines include processed meats, beer, fermented foods, aged cheese, bananas, and avocados.