

**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)? **They increase the availability of neurotransmitters (mostly serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine) in the brain, which enhances mood.**

2. For what must a nurse be on the alert with a client who is receiving antidepressant medication? **Risk for suicide in early treatment, this is because the mood has not yet been enhanced, but energy levels have, so if a client was having thoughts of suicide prior to treatment, they may have the energy to carry out their plans.**

3. When should a nurse expect a client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy? **Usually 2-4 weeks but can take up to 6-8 weeks.**

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: **Amitriptyline (Elavil)**

Give an example of an MAOI: **Phenelzine (Nardil)**

Give an example of an SSRI: **Fluoxetine (Prozac)**

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

Dry mouth, blurred vision (EPS) and urinary retention (monitor UO).

6. **Hypertensive crisis** is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert include **Severe HA, HTN, N/V, tachycardia, chest pain, diaphoresis.**

7. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring? **Avoid anything containing tyramine (fermented and aged foods, red wine, beer), avoid pseudoephedrine (and anything containing it), monitor B/P, do not stop medication abruptly, dose low and slow.**