

Question 1

A psychiatric–mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) begins treatment with a 16-year-old patient for depression. During the initial visit, the adolescent asks whether the information shared in therapy will remain confidential from parents. Which response by the provider demonstrates the most appropriate ethical and legal approach?

- A. Inform the patient that all information will remain confidential unless parents request records
- B. Explain that parents have full access to all medical information without exception
- C. Clarify that confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits and explain situations where disclosure may occur
- D. Refuse to discuss confidentiality until the parent is present

Correct Answer: C

Rationale:

Confidentiality with minors is **limited and conditional**. Providers must balance parental rights with adolescent privacy. Ethical practice requires discussing **confidentiality boundaries at the outset**, including circumstances requiring disclosure such as **risk of harm, abuse, or legal mandates**. Option A is incorrect because confidentiality is not absolute. Option B disregards the adolescent's privacy rights. Option D delays an essential component of informed care.

Question 2

A 15-year-old patient presents requesting treatment for substance misuse but asks the clinician not to inform parents. Which factor should primarily guide the provider's decision regarding parental involvement?

- A. Whether the patient demonstrates emotional maturity
- B. State laws regarding minor consent for substance use treatment
- C. Whether the patient is financially dependent on parents
- D. The provider's clinical judgment regarding treatment necessity

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Several states permit minors to **consent independently to certain healthcare services**, including **substance use treatment, sexual health services, and sometimes mental health care**. The determining factor is **state-specific legal statutes** governing minor consent. Emotional maturity and clinical judgment may influence care planning but **cannot override legal requirements**.

Question 3

A PMHNP prescribes an SSRI for a 13-year-old patient diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Which clinical monitoring strategy is most appropriate during the early phase of treatment?

- A. Monitor blood pressure weekly
- B. Monitor for emergence of suicidal ideation and behavioral changes
- C. Monitor liver enzymes every two weeks
- D. Monitor fasting glucose levels

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Antidepressants in pediatric populations carry an **FDA boxed warning regarding increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors**, particularly during treatment initiation and dose adjustments. Close monitoring for **behavioral activation, worsening depression, or suicidality** is essential. Routine liver or glucose monitoring is not required for SSRIs unless specific clinical conditions warrant it.

Question 4

A psychiatric nurse practitioner evaluates a 10-year-old patient for medication management. Which pharmacologic principle is most important when initiating medication in pediatric patients?

- A. Begin with adult dosing adjusted for age
- B. Use weight-based dosing due to developmental pharmacokinetics
- C. Avoid psychiatric medications entirely in children
- D. Use standard dosing regardless of body mass

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Children exhibit **different pharmacokinetic profiles**, including variations in metabolism, distribution, and clearance. As a result, many medications require **weight-based dosing** to ensure therapeutic effectiveness while minimizing toxicity. Adult dosing approaches are inappropriate and potentially dangerous.

Question 5

A therapist working with a minor patient becomes concerned that the child may be experiencing physical abuse at home. What is the provider's legal responsibility?

- A. Discuss concerns with the parents before reporting
- B. Document the concern but wait for confirmation before reporting
- C. Report suspected abuse to appropriate authorities according to mandatory reporting laws
- D. Encourage the child to disclose the abuse to school staff instead

Correct Answer: C

Rationale:

Healthcare providers are **mandated reporters** and must report **suspected abuse or neglect** when there is reasonable suspicion. Proof is **not required** prior to reporting. Waiting for confirmation or relying on the child to disclose elsewhere can delay protection and may violate legal obligations.

Question 6

A pregnant patient with severe depression asks whether she should discontinue her antidepressant medication. Which response by the psychiatric provider best reflects evidence-based clinical reasoning?

- A. All antidepressants must be discontinued immediately during pregnancy
- B. The risks of untreated depression must be weighed against potential medication risks
- C. Antidepressants are always safe during pregnancy
- D. Medication decisions should be postponed until after delivery

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Treatment decisions during pregnancy require **risk-benefit analysis**. Untreated maternal depression is associated with **preterm birth, impaired bonding, and poor maternal functioning**, while medications may carry **potential fetal risks depending on the drug and trimester**. Evidence-based care balances these considerations rather than automatically discontinuing medication.

Question 7

A patient with postpartum depression plans to breastfeed and requires pharmacologic treatment. Which medication characteristic makes **sertraline (Zoloft)** a commonly preferred SSRI during lactation?

- A. It has the strongest antidepressant effect
- B. It has minimal transfer into breast milk
- C. It has the shortest half-life of SSRIs
- D. It does not affect infant neurotransmitters

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Sertraline is often preferred during breastfeeding because it demonstrates **low levels of transfer into breast milk and minimal infant serum levels**. This reduces potential exposure to the infant compared with other SSRIs.

Question 8

A postpartum patient taking sertraline for depression reports concern about possible medication effects on her infant during breastfeeding. Which monitoring approach is most appropriate?

- A. Monitor infant for sedation, irritability, or feeding problems
- B. Measure infant liver enzymes weekly
- C. Stop breastfeeding immediately
- D. Monitor infant blood pressure daily

Correct Answer: A

Rationale:

Although sertraline transfer is low, clinicians should **monitor infants for behavioral or physiological changes**, including **sedation, irritability, poor feeding, or sleep disturbances**. Routine laboratory testing is not typically required unless symptoms appear.

Question 9

A pregnant patient receiving psychiatric treatment expresses hesitation about medication use but also reports worsening depression. Which intervention best reflects patient-centered care principles?

- A. Instruct the patient to follow the provider's recommendation without discussion
- B. Discontinue treatment until pregnancy is complete
- C. Engage in shared decision-making regarding treatment options and risks
- D. Refer the patient immediately to another provider

Correct Answer: C

Rationale:

Maternal mental health treatment should incorporate **shared decision-making**, allowing the patient to participate in evaluating treatment risks, benefits, and personal goals such as breastfeeding or symptom relief. This approach improves adherence and respects patient autonomy.

Question 10

A psychiatric nurse practitioner treating a pregnant patient with depression consults with the patient's obstetrician regarding medication management. Which principle of maternal mental health treatment does this best represent?

- A. Defensive medicine
- B. Interprofessional collaboration
- C. Mandatory reporting
- D. Confidential documentation

Correct Answer: B

Rationale:

Optimal treatment of perinatal psychiatric conditions often involves **collaboration between psychiatric providers, OB/GYNs, and perinatal specialists**. Interprofessional care improves maternal and fetal outcomes by integrating obstetric and psychiatric considerations.

Question 1

A 17-year-old patient asks the PMHNP not to disclose their depression diagnosis to their parents. Which response is most consistent with ethical practice?

- A. Assure the patient the information will remain completely confidential
- B. Explain that parents automatically have access to all health information
- C. Discuss confidentiality limits and clarify when disclosure may occur
- D. Decline treatment unless the parents are present

Correct Answer: C

Rationale: Adolescents have **limited confidentiality**, but providers must clarify boundaries early in care. Confidentiality may be maintained in many situations but must be broken when **safety concerns or legal requirements arise**.

Question 2