Chapter 33
Concepts of Mental Health

Basic Concepts of Mental Health

- Use mental health nursing principles in a variety of health care settings
- Concepts are useful in understanding behavioral responses to disease and dysfunction
- Behavior is the manner in which a person performs any or all of the activities of daily living
- Mental health is one’s ability to cope with and adjust to the recurrent stresses of everyday living

Basic Concepts of Mental Health (Cont.)

- Mental illness is evidenced by a pattern of behaviors that is conspicuous, threatening, and disruptive of relationships or deviates from acceptable behaviors
- Assessing and intervening while maintaining a caring relationship of trust with the patient
- Assist to achieve satisfying and productive ways to deal with daily living
Historical Overview of Mental Health Care

- During early history, a physically or mentally ill person was thought to be possessed by evil spirits
- For mental illness, the shamans or medicine men focused on removing evil spirits through magical treatments
- If these tribal rites were unsuccessful, the individual was abandoned to die by starvation or attack by wild animals

Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- In the Dark Ages, the church became powerful, and knowledge was kept in monasteries
- Early Christians believed mental illness was punishment for sins committed, possession by the devil, or caused by witchcraft
- Exorcisms, physical punishment and imprisonment, or banishment became the treatment for mental illness

Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- During the 17th and 18th centuries, conditions for the mentally ill were worse than ever
- Bleeding, starving, beating, purging, and confinement were the treatments of the day
- Latter half of the 18th century, psychiatry became a separate branch of medicine
- In England, an asylum was built
- The Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia was established for the treatment of the mentally ill
Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- The 19th century saw the flourishing of institutions and asylums
- Overcrowding and bureaucracy brought the decline of care provided by institutions
- Dorothea Dix was appalled by the care of the mentally ill and set out to do something about it

Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- The 20th century ushered in the reform of mental health care
- The Committee for Mental Hygiene was formed in 1909
- During the 1930s, ECT and insulin shock therapy were developed and used to treat schizophrenia
- Frontal lobotomy was used to eliminate violent behavior

Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- In the 1940s, passage of the National Health Act and the establishment of the National Institute of Mental Health
- Established research funding for the cause, prevention, and treatment of mental illnesses
- The 1950s brought about the introduction of psychotherapeutic drugs
- In the 1960s and 1970s, legislatures brought about changes in mental health treatment at the community level
Historical Overview of Mental Health Care (Cont.)

- Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981
  - Drastically reduced funding for the mental health system
  - Deinstitutionalization was rapid
- In the 21st century, mental health concepts and principles are practiced in a variety of settings

Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health

- Mental health continuum
  - On the illness end, the person is rarely in touch with reality, but on the healthy side, the person demonstrates a high level of wellness
  - Assessment of components of mental health
  - Mental illness determined by behavior exhibited and context in which the behavior is observed
  - Results from an inability to cope with an overwhelming situation

Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- Personality and self-concept
  - Personality
  - Erik Erikson
    - Provided a framework for understanding personality development
  - Sigmund Freud
    - Personality development has three parts
Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- Personality and self-concept
  - Self-concept
    - Frame of reference the individual uses for all he or she knows and experiences
    - Includes all perceptions and values held and behaviors and interactions
    - During growth and development, the individual accumulates and processes information that helps form a basic perception of who he is, how he looks, and how others react to him

Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- Stress
  - Nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it
  - Individual’s response to stressful situations or events is often a result of learned or conditioned behavior
  - Stressor examples
    - Physical, social or spiritual, economic, chemical
  - Mental health nursing concerns itself with behavior, particularly a person’s response to stressors

Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- Anxiety
  - Vague feeling of apprehension that results from a perceived threat to self
  - Major component of all mental health disturbances
  - Degrees of anxiety
Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- **Motivation**
  - Gathering of personal resources or inner drive to complete a task or reach a goal
  - May be generated by
    - Perceived reward
    - Perceived threat of punishment
  - Motivation to participate in care helps the patient move quickly through the stages of recovery

- **Frustration**
  - Involves anything that interferes with goal-directed activity
  - Some people are more flexible and adaptable than others
  - When adaptive behavior fails, anxiety increases

- **Conflict**
  - Mental struggle, either conscious or unconscious, resulting from the simultaneous presence of opposing or incompatible thoughts, ideas, goals, or emotional forces, such as impulses, denials, or drives
  - Some conflicts are easily resolved; others are more complicated
Basic Concepts Related to Mental Health (Cont.)

- Adaptation and coping
  - Adaptation
  - Coping responses: Used to reduce anxiety brought on by stress
  - May be used consciously or unconsciously
  - Defense mechanisms

Illness Behaviors

- Illness
  - State of homeostatic imbalance
- Crisis
  - Time of change or turning point in life when patterns of living must be modified to prevent disorganization of the person or family
  - Some individuals have difficulty coping with an illness or crisis
  - Learned behavior patterns are brought into the health care setting

How Illness Affects Mental Health

- Illness behaviors
  - Common behaviors seen with illness
    - Denial
    - Anxiety
    - Shock
    - Anger
    - Withdrawal
Crisis Intervention

- A serious illness, the breakup of a relationship, a car accident, or the death of a loved one can trigger a crisis response in an individual or a family
- Phases of crisis similar to stages of grief
  - Confusion, disbelief, and high anxiety
  - Denial
  - Reality; anger and remorse
  - Sadness and crying
  - Reconciliation and adaptation

Crisis Intervention (Cont.)

- Nursing interventions
  - Provide accurate information that aids in realistic perception of the situation
  - Encourage venting of feelings
  - Identify family supports and adequate coping mechanisms

Question 1

An individual experiencing a feeling of impending danger would be experiencing what level of anxiety?
1. Mild
2. Moderate
3. Severe
4. Panic
Question 2

Which common defense mechanism involves emotions being expressed toward someone or something other than the actual source of the emotion?

1. Compensation
2. Conversion
3. Displacement
4. Dissociation

Question 3

__________ can be defined as the manner in which a person performs any or all of the activities of daily life.

1. Adaptation
2. Behavior
3. Crisis
4. Mental health

Question 4

What percentage of people in the U.S. will develop a mental health disorder in their lifetime?

1. 10%
2. 25%
3. 50%
4. 75%
Question 5

Who has been credited as the first psychiatric nurse?
1. William Tukes
2. Dorothea Dix
3. Martha Mitchell
4. Linda Richards