Stress

- A broad class of experiences in which a demanding situation taxes a person's resources, or coping capabilities, causing a negative effect.

Figure 8.2 Factors involved in stress. Several important factors are involved in understanding stress. They include personality factors (such as how we handle anger), cognitive factors (such as whether we perceive an event as a challenge or threat), physical factors (such as how the body responds to stress), environmental factors (such as fog, fire, or snow), cultural factors (such as our learned beliefs about religion, health, and family), and coping strategies (such as what we do to manage stress).
Conflict Sources

- Unconscious needs
- Everyday and family life
- Social Issues
- Ethical Issues

Types of Conflict

- Approach-Avoidance
- Avoidance-Avoidance
- Vacillation

Biopsychosocial Theories

- Fight or Flight
  - Maladaptive
  - Physiologic stress
Stress and Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome

Click here to view an interactive video on Stress and Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome

Life Change Theory of Stress

● Life change units (LCU)
● Holmes and Rahe Scale
● Assumptions/cautions when applying the theory to mental health

Assumptions/ Cautions

● Same response to stress
● Common threshold for stress effect
● Same event = same stress
● Same amount of adaptation required
● Stress = change
● Some life events irrelevant to some people
Stress as a Transaction

- Primary appraisal
- Secondary appraisal
- Coping
- Reappraisal

Psychoneuroimmunology Framework

- Self-healing personalities
- Hardiness and health
- Disease-prone personalities

Stress and the Immune System

Click here to view an interactive animation on stress and the immune system
Stress and the Immune System

Click here to view an interactive animation on the HPA Axis Response to Stress.

Stress and the Immune System

Click here to view an interactive animation on the Sympathetic Nervous System Response to Stress.

Box 8.1 General Causes of Anxiety

1. Threats to biologic integrity: actual or impending
   interference with basic human needs such as the needs for
   food, drink, or warmth
2. Threats to the security of the self:
   a. Unmet expectations important to self-integrity
   b. Unmet needs for status and prestige
   c. Anticipated disapproval by significant others
   d. Inability to gain or reinforce self-respect or gain
      recognition from others
   e. Guilt, or discrepancies between self-view and actual
      behavior

Box 8.1 General Causes of Anxiety
Anxiety

- Neurobiological basis
- Measurable
- Assessment
  - Emotional/behavioral
  - Physiological
  - Cognitive

Anxiety - continued

- Levels of Anxiety
  - Mild
  - Moderate
  - Severe
  - Panic

Coping

- Task-oriented
  - Problem solving
- Defense-oriented
  - Protective
Coping Strategies

- Seeking comfort
- Relying on self-discipline
- Intense expression of feeling
- Avoidance and withdrawal

Coping Strategies - continued

- Talking it out
- Privately thinking it through
- Working it off
- Engaging in self-healing and mind/body practices

Coping Strategies - continued

- Spirituality and prayerfulness
- Symbolic substitutes
- Somatizing
Coping Resources

- Sense of Coherence
  - Comprehensible
  - Manageable
  - Meaningful
- GRRs

Defensive Coping

- Repression
- Suppression
- Dissociation
- Identification
- Introjection
- Projection

Defensive Coping - continued

- Denial
- Fantasy
- Rationalization
- Reaction formation
- Displacement
- Intellectualization
Intervention Strategies

- Repression/suppression – support, protect, and help client develop objectivity
- Dissociation – help client recall and resolve past conflicts
- Identification/introjection – clarify roles, assist with client self-care plan and self-awareness

Intervention Strategies - continued

- Projection – respect, separate feelings from facts
- Denial – discern protective function, then either support denial or focus on reality
- Fantasy – focus on realistic plans and expectations

Intervention Strategies - continued

- Rationalization – focus on strengths and past success
- Reaction formation – respect and support, provide security
- Displacement – focus on reason for anger
- Intellectualization – explore emotional reactions
Influence on Stress
Altered Course or Treatment

- Psychiatric disorder
- Symptom
- Personality trait
- Coping style
- Maladaptive health behavior
- Stress related physiologic response

Significantly Higher Risk

Figure 8.6 The multicausalational concept of the illness process. The phrase “Meaning and Symbol” refers to the fact that clients interpret all experiences in a highly individual manner according to their specific meaning and the broader meaning in the client's culture.

Conditions with Psychological Components

- Cardiovascular
- Gastrointestinal
- Hormonal
- Immune
- Integumentary
- Neuromuscular and Skeletal
- Respiratory
The Challenge

- As nurses work with individuals to increase their awareness of stress and improve health-promoting behaviors, they will find that these tasks are not always easy, nor do they always result in change.

Resources

- http://www.ahha.org
  The American Holistic Health Association is a not-for-profit organization that offers free information about health and wellness resources. Resources at this website include both conventional and alternative medicine.

- http://www.stress.org
  The American Institute of Stress serves as a clearinghouse for information on stress-related subjects. This site full-text articles, newsletters, bulletins, and a searchable archive to explore the effects of stress on health.

Resources - continued

  This site from Medicine.Net has a wealth of information about stress such as history, causative factors, stress-related disorders, and stress reduction programs.