



Stress and Healthcare Professionals- Especially Relating to Nurses

Aspen Family Counseling- Barry Erath, LCSW



Stress and Healthcare Professionals

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•Environment

Helping professionals such as teachers, social workers, and especially nurses are very prone to stress. By their very nature, they try to change the(ir) environment for the better, but are met with obstacles or resistance that is outside of their control.

DISTRESS or EUSTRESS

Physical or Emotional



How do you view stress?

DISTRESS is something that is a threat to your comfort zone. It can be physical or emotional, but it compromises your sense of security in some way. Though many people consider this to be a negative event, positive events can create stress also. This is known as EUSTRESS. Weddings, births, graduations, vacations are examples of such.

FIGHT or FLIGHT

- Fight or Flight is a reaction that started back in the caveman era.
- Our brains secret adrenaline as a defense to fight a stressor.
- Norepinephrine (noradrenalin) alerts us to avoid a particular stressor.

- What are some examples of when you have fought?
- When have you fled?

Environmental Changes

1

Nurses have a high internal need to change the environment.

This is an internal need to change an external circumstance.

2

Nurses strive for goals of a cure or fix, maintenance of a condition, or comfort in patient care that is deteriorating.

3

Nurses in Public Health have global goals, such as:

- education of the masses
- prevention of the spread of disease
- public quarantine of an illness

**What are some of the other duties of Public Health?
What are some of the barriers to success?**

AAAbc of Stress Management



- The first A of the AAAbc stands for Alter which implies removing the source of stress by changing something. Problem-solving, direct communication, organizing, planning and time management are common techniques for altering stress.
- The second A of the AAAbc model stands for Avoid which implies removing oneself from the stressful situation or figuring out how not to get there in the first place! To conserve stress energy, people sometimes need to walk away, let go, say “no,” “delegate, withdraw and know their limits so they can “live to fight another day.
- The third A of the AAAbc model stands for Accept which involves equipping oneself physically and mentally for stress. The b and c of the AAAbc model represent this physical and mental preparation.

AAAbc of Stress Management cont.

- b stands for building resistance. People can increase their capacity to tolerate stress physically through proper diet, regular exercise and systematic relaxation techniques. Relaxation and exercise provide the double bonus of releasing stored up tension as well! Mental resistance is bolstered through positive affirmation, taking time for mental health, getting clear about goals/values/priorities. Social resistance is strengthened by building and maintaining support systems, investing in relationships, clear communication and intimacy. Spiritual resistance is especially important in times of high stress. Meditation, prayer, worship, faith and commitment strengthen people.
- c stands for change. One way to Accept stress is to change the way you perceive the situation or yourself. Changing unrealistic expectations and irrational beliefs such as “I should succeed at everything I try,” or “it would be awful if my spouse were angry with me,” is a good start. Building self-esteem and cultivating a positive attitude help as well. Redefining the situation in a less stress-provoking way is always an option- - when people play “ain’t it funny” or “ain’t it grand” instead of “ain’t it awful,” their stress resistance increases.

AAAbc Application Form



Scenario:

Alter: How could you remove the source of stress?

Avoid: How could you get away from or prevent the stress?

Accept: How could you live with the stress?

- Build Up Resistance
- Change Self/Perceptions

Best Option:

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THANK YOU!