

Home and Work Health: Nurses Dealing with Life Stresses

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Objectives

- Describe transactional model of stress
- Discuss sources of stress in nursing
- Identify two techniques for stress relief that can be done anytime

How do you react?

- Co worker calls out second Monday in a row
- Readmission of difficult patient
- Being asked to cover for another discipline
- Spouse didn't pay bill
- Stuck in rush hour traffic-will be late for meeting

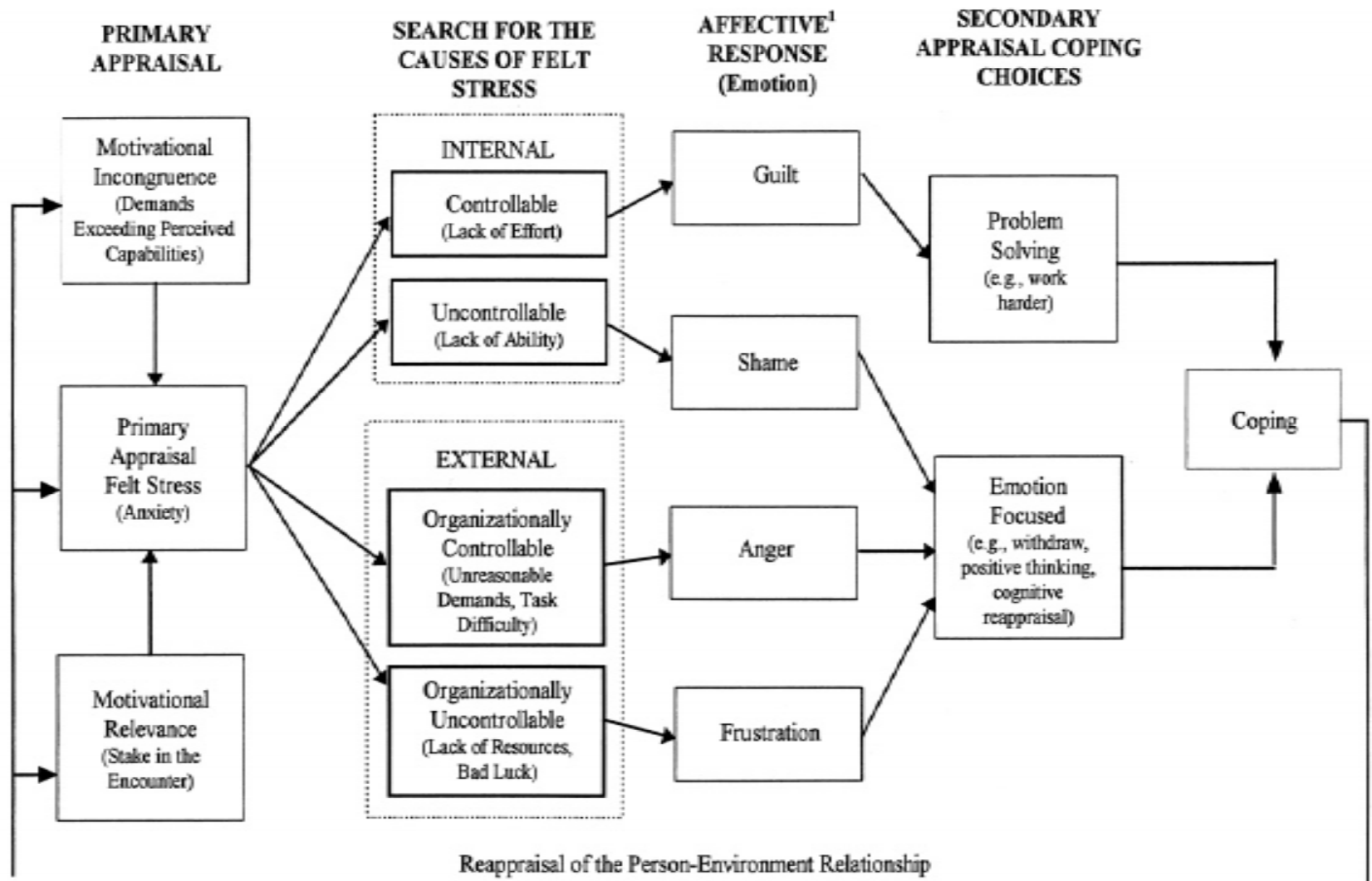
What is Stress?

Stress is a reaction to some stimulus or demand that produces an elevated state of arousal or readiness. The greater the stimulus, the greater is the stress reaction.

BUT

- The stress response is mediated by our perception of events.
- Our ability to change our interpretation of stressful events is a key to stress resilience!

Transactional Model of Stress



Sources of stress

- Daily hassles
- Major life events
- Serious work events*
- Catastrophes

Daily Hassles

- Losing keys
- Getting on the scale
- Aches and pains
- Lack of privacy
- Financial worry
- Difficulty dealing with technology

Major Life Events

- Nodal events
- New job
- Buying or selling a home
- Moving
- Loss of job
- Child leaving home (or moving back)
- Etc.

Serious work events

- Failed resuscitation 1.0
- Complicated death 1.0
- Physical aggression 1.0
- Emergency situation 1.0
- Undesired intimacies 1.0
- Serious suffering 1.0
- Death of a young patient 0.9
- Jab-accident 0.9
- Verbal aggression 0.9
- Suicide of patient 0.9
- Successful resuscitation 0.8
- Euthanasia 0.7
- Death of an old patient 0.6

Note. Nursing LIST = List of Serious Events and Traumatic Stress in Nursing. $p < .05$ for items with content validity of 0.8-1.0.

From: Buurman et al, Coping With Serious Events at Work: A Study of Traumatic Stress Among Nurses. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, September/October 2011; vol. 17, 5: pp. 321-329.

Reactions to stress

- Hot reactors – get sick and develop illnesses in response to stress
- Sustainers – get sick later
- Hardy = able to experience stress and maintain health

Classic Response

- Fight-flight
- Research on female response:
 - Tend and befriend

Warning signs

COGNITIVE

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Negativity
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

EMOTIONAL

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Warning Signs

PHYSICAL

- Aches and pains
- Headaches
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

BEHAVIORAL

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g., nail biting, pacing)

A Few Selected Techniques

- Relaxation
- Mindfulness
 - MBSR
 - Meditation
- Mantram
 - “Jacuzzi for the mind”
- Guided Imagery

Relaxation

- Deep breathing
- Progressive relaxation
- Warm baths
- Massage
- Stretching

Mindfulness

- Meditation
- Body scan
- Walking meditation
- Mindful eating
- Mindful yoga

Mantras

- Buddhist – Om Mane Padme Hum
- Hindu – Om Nama Shivaya
- Christian – My God my All
- Jewish – Baruch Ata Adonai
- Muslim – Allah
- Native American – O Wakan Tonka

Questions

Thank you!