

Concept of Mental Health

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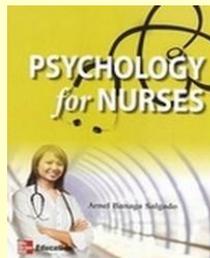
Registered Nurse (RP, Mal, UAE)

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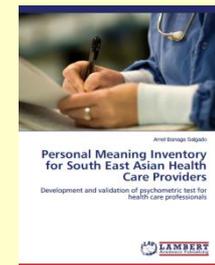
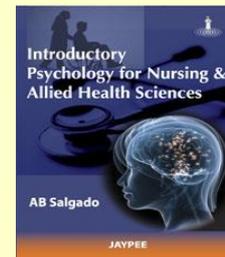
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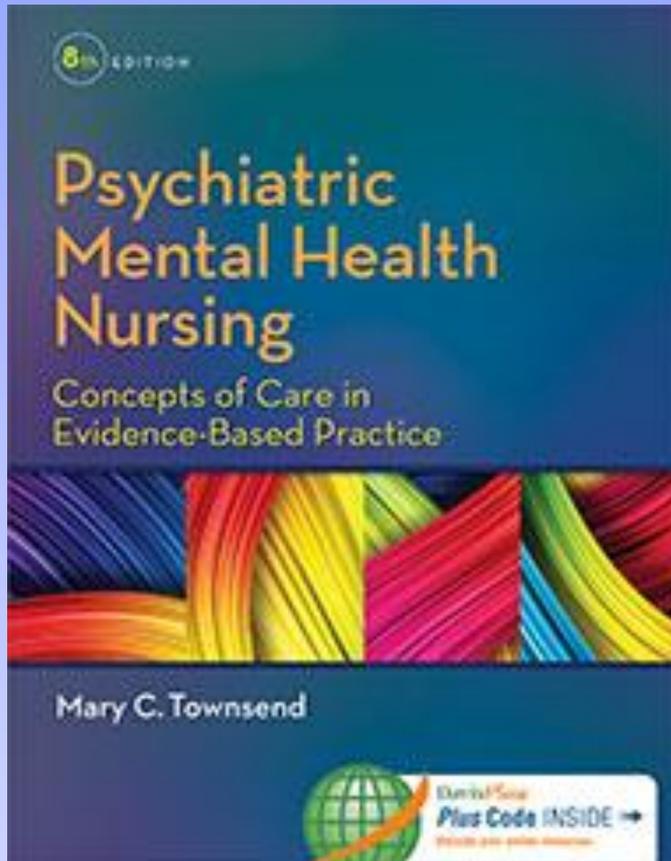
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McGraw-Hill



Textbook (Required for reading)



**PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH
NURSING: CONCEPTS OF CARE
IN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE,
8th Edition**

Mary C. Townsend

ISBN: 978-0-8036-4092-4

Learning Objectives

- Define mental health
- Discuss the various attributes of mental health
- Differentiate between mental health and illness
- Discuss the role of various factors affecting mental health
- Describe the various effects of stress

Definition of Mental Health

- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as:

a state of balance between the individual and the surrounding world, a state of harmony between oneself and others, a co-existence between the realities of the self and that of other people and that of the environment.

Myths and Misconceptions

- Religious–spiritual factors are the cause of mental illnesses.
- Mental illness in a pregnant mother can be transmitted to the unborn child.

Myths and Misconceptions (cont.)

- Mental illness can be contracted through touching, eating and living with a mentally ill patient.
- Mentally ill patients are violent and dangerous, therefore, they should be locked up.
- Mental illness is an incurable, lifelong disease.

Myths and Misconceptions (cont.)

- Medications used for treatment can change the personality of the patient and cause addiction.
- Mental illnesses can be cured through prayers, offerings and exorcism.

Attributes of Mental Health

- The attributes of mental health are:
 - i. Clear and realistic thinking
 - ii. Control and responsibility over behaviour
 - iii. Able to form and sustain relationships
 - iv. Able to maintain a healthy self-esteem
 - v. Happy and in control of emotions

Factors Influencing Mental Health

- Three factors influencing mental health include:
 - i. Biological factors
 - ii. Psychological factors
 - iii. Social factors

Biological factors

- Inherited factors (genetic)
- Hormones and neurochemicals
- Changes in brain structure

Psychological factors

- Early development
- Personality traits
- Poor parenting
- Childhood traumas

Sociocultural factors

- Cultural beliefs and health practices
- Religious influences
- Poverty
- Inadequate parenting
- Unemployment
- Support system (family, friends)

Biological Factors

- These factors consist of:
 - i. Inherited factors (genetic defects, chromosomal mutations)
 - ii. Hormones and neurochemicals (endocrinal abnormalities, abnormal brain functioning)
 - iii. Changes in brain structure (brain injuries, neurotransmitter dysfunction)

Psychological Factors

- These have a role in the causation of mental illnesses but are difficult to identify and measure.
- These factors are considered less specific.

Psychological Factors (cont.)

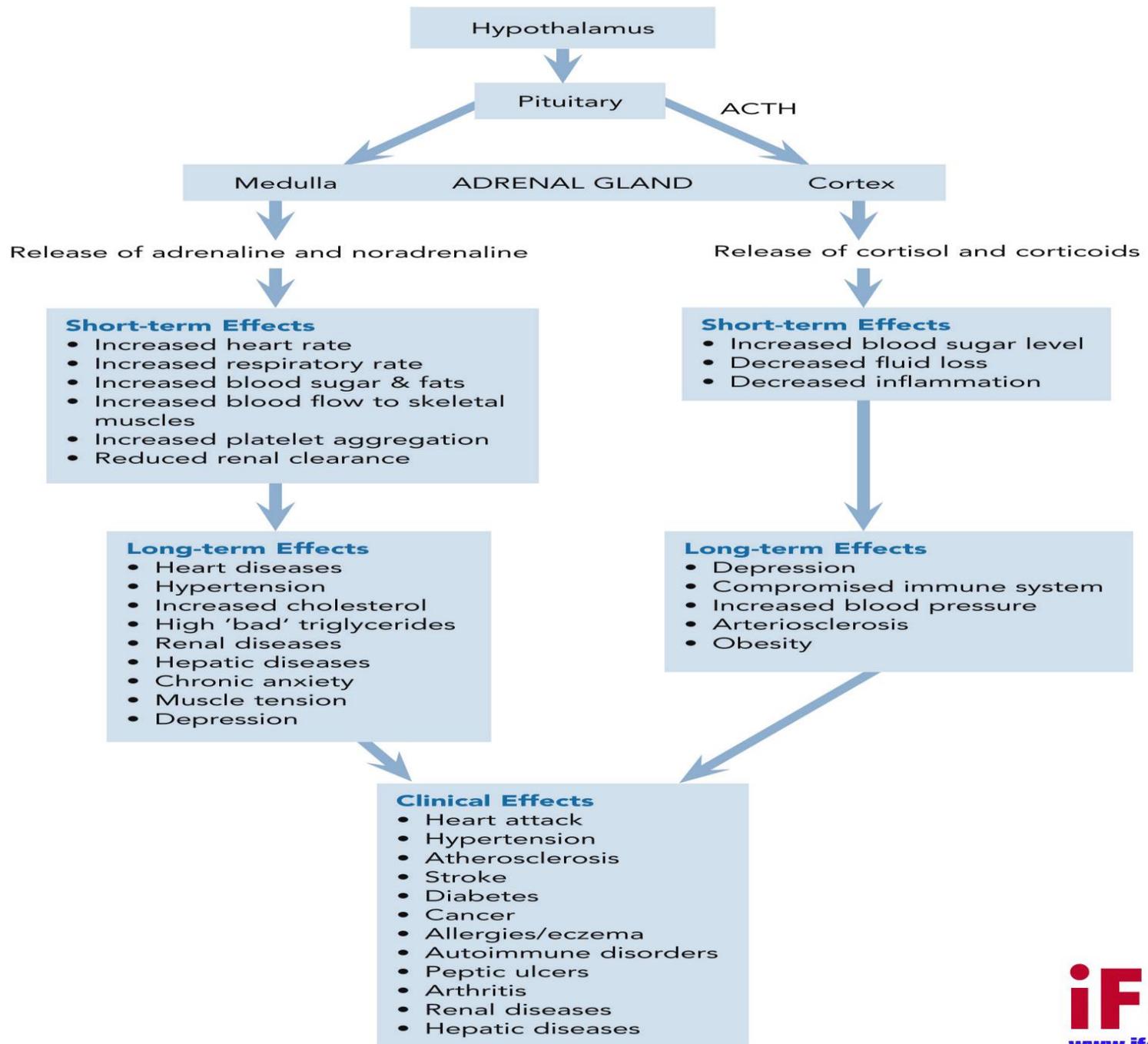
- **Examples of such causes include:**
 - i. **Distorted priorities**
 - ii. **Distorted identities**
 - iii. **Maternal and emotional deprivation**
 - iv. **Abuses in early childhood**

Social Factors

- Various social factors that can affect mental health include:
 - i. Poverty
 - ii. Unavailability of necessary resources for growing children
 - iii. Discrimination
 - iv. Gender bias
 - v. Unemployment

Stress Reaction & Adaptation

- Stress is considered negative, the outcomes, however, can be positive.
- Early childhood stress, unresolved stress or chronic stress can lead to mental and physical illnesses.
- Stress can lead to symptoms of mental illnesses.



The Diathesis-Stress Model

- Certain genes or genetic combinations produces a diathesis, i.e. a predisposition to an illness, which when combined with negative life events could lead to mental illnesses.

Fight-or-Flight Response

- This was described by Walter Cannon as an *acute stress response*.
- This model describes the body's response to a situation that a person perceives as a threat to life.
- Brigham (1994) operationally defined the various steps in the fight-or-flight response.

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- This was developed by Hans Selye who worked on the *chronic stress response*.
- He postulated that the body tries to maintain homeostasis by adjusting to physiological processes and resisting physiological changes.

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) (cont.)

- The GAS occurs in two stages:
 - i. Acute stress reaction
(fight-or-flight response)
 - ii. Chronic maladaptive response to
prolonged stress

Distress and Eustress

- Distress is a **negative** stress and is harmful (e.g. confusion, fatigue, anxiety).
- Eustress is **positive**, beneficial and motivating (e.g. happiness, peacefulness, hopefulness).

Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)

- This model describes the link between:
 - i. Stress
 - ii. Immune system
 - iii. Illnesses
- This model states that stress can modulate the immune system.

Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) (cont.)

- i. The activated immune system sends messages to the brain via cytokines.
- ii. The brain initiates a number of changes in the central nervous system.
- iii. These neural changes affect thinking, emotions and behaviour.