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Theories and Models of Mental Health Nursing

Mental Health Nursing

Psychoanalytic theory, behavioural theory, cognitive theory, humanistic theory, interpersonal theory, biological model and other approaches to understanding mental illness.

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CHAPTER 02 / MENTAL HEALTH NURSING 02. Theories and Models of Mental Health Nursing

1. Biopsychosocial framework

Psychological disorders arise through interacting biological, psychological, social and environmental factors. Genetic susceptibility, neurobiology, physical disease, trauma, learned responses, cognition, poverty, discrimination and social support may be relevant. No single theory explains every presentation.

2. Major theories

Model/theorist	Main concepts	Nursing application
Psychoanalytic (Freud)	Id, ego, superego; unconscious conflict and defences	Consider emotional meaning, recognize patterns, avoid imposing interpretations.
Behavioural (Pavlov, Skinner)	Classical/operant conditioning, reinforcement and learning	Promote adaptive behaviour and support structured exposure under therapist guidance.
Cognitive (Beck, Ellis)	Interpretations, beliefs and cognitive distortions influence emotions/actions	Help identify thoughts and encourage balanced appraisal using appropriate skills.
Humanistic (Rogers, Maslow)	Self-concept, empathy, acceptance and growth	Person-centred listening, autonomy, individual goals and dignity.
Interpersonal (Peplau, Sullivan)	Relationships affect well-being; therapeutic partnership	Establish rapport, clarify roles, work towards goals and therapeutic closure.
Biological	Genetic, neurochemical, hormonal and neural-system factors	Assess medical causes, administer prescribed treatment and monitor adverse effects.
Social and stress-vulnerability	Susceptibility interacts with stress, coping and support	Reduce stressors, connect resources, prevent relapse.

3. Peplau's interpersonal relations theory

Original phases: orientation (identify need/relationship), identification (patient identifies with helpful resources), exploitation (use of therapeutic services), resolution (needs addressed and relationship concludes). Nursing teaching often uses pre-interaction, orientation, working and termination phases. Roles include teacher, resource person, counsellor, leader, stranger and surrogate. Maintain professional purpose and avoid dependency.

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4. Defence mechanisms and coping

Largely unconscious defences reduce distress (denial, projection, displacement, repression, sublimation); suppression is conscious. Coping involves efforts to manage demands: problem-focused modifies stressor, emotion-focused manages responses. Encourage adaptive coping rather than confronting defences harshly. Historical models have explanatory limitations, and biological models should not be reduced to an unproven single chemical imbalance.

5. Important Examination Questions

Long Answer Questions

1. 1. Explain major theories/models of mental illness with nursing applications.

Short Answer Questions

1. 1. Describe Freud's personality structure
2. 2. explain Peplau's phases
3. 3. differentiate behavioural and cognitive theories.

Very Short Answer Questions (with answers)

1. 1. Who proposed client-centred therapy? - Carl Rogers.
2. 2. What is reinforcement? - A consequence that increases a behaviour.

6. Quick Revision

- Theories guide different interventions.
- Biopsychosocial assessment integrates multiple factors.
- Peplau emphasizes the therapeutic relationship.

7. Conclusion

Theories guide different interventions. Biopsychosocial assessment integrates multiple factors. Peplau emphasizes the therapeutic relationship.

Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

1. Which model focuses on how interpretations and beliefs influence emotions and actions?

A. Behavioural model
B. Biological model
C. Cognitive model
D. Psychoanalytic model

2. In Peplau's original phases, when does the patient make use of therapeutic services?

A. Orientation
B. Identification
C. Resolution

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D. Exploitation

3. Which response to stress is described as conscious rather than a largely unconscious defence?

A. Suppression

B. Repression

C. Projection

D. Displacement

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Answer key and explanations

1. C - Cognitive model

The cognitive model links beliefs and interpretations with emotional and behavioural responses.

2. D - Exploitation

Exploitation is the original phase involving use of therapeutic services.

3. A - Suppression

Suppression is conscious; the listed defence mechanisms largely operate unconsciously.

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