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Mental Health Nursing

Normal & Abnormal Behavior (Concepts, Stress, Defense Mechanisms)

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1. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is best defined as:

A) The absence of psychiatric disorders

B) A state of well-being where an individual realizes their own potential and can cope with normal life stresses

C) The ability to conform to societal norms without deviation

D) A condition achieved only through psychological therapy

Correct Answer: B) A state of well-being where an individual realizes their own potential and can cope with normal life stresses

Rationale: WHO defines mental health not merely as the absence of disease, but as a holistic state of well-being encompassing coping, productivity, and community contribution.

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2. A key indicator of abnormal behavior in psychiatric nursing is when the behavior:

A) Differs slightly from the individual's family

B) Is uniquely creative and unconventional

C) Causes significant subjective distress or impairment in social/occupational functioning

D) Is highly extroverted

Correct Answer: C) Causes significant subjective distress or impairment in social/occupational functioning

Rationale: Abnormality is typically defined clinically by the presence of significant distress or a decline in the ability to function in daily life.

3. Cultural relativism in mental health nursing suggests that:

A) All cultures experience mental illness identically

B) Normal and abnormal behaviors must be evaluated within the context of the individual's culture

C) Western diagnostic criteria are universally applicable

D) Culture has no impact on the presentation of psychiatric symptoms

Correct Answer: B) Normal and abnormal behaviors must be evaluated within the context of the individual's culture

Rationale: Behaviors considered normal in one culture may be viewed as abnormal in another; assessing cultural context is essential for accurate diagnosis.

4. The concept of 'resilience' in mental health refers to:

A) The inability to feel stress

B) A genetic immunity to depression

C) The ability to adapt successfully to stress, trauma, or adversity

D) Avoiding all conflict in life

Correct Answer: C) The ability to adapt successfully to stress, trauma, or adversity

Rationale: Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, or significant sources of stress.

5. Jahoda's criteria for ideal mental health include all of the following EXCEPT:

A) Accurate perception of reality

B) Total dependence on others for decision making

C) Mastery of the environment

D) Integration and autonomy

Correct Answer: B) Total dependence on others for decision making

Rationale: Marie Jahoda's criteria include autonomy and independence, not total dependence on others.

6. A patient consistently avoids social interactions due to an overwhelming fear of judgment. This behavior is considered abnormal primarily because it:

A) Violates legal standards

B) Is dangerous to others

C) Is maladaptive and impairs psychosocial functioning

D) Shows high intelligence

Correct Answer: C) Is maladaptive and impairs psychosocial functioning

Rationale: Maladaptive behaviors interfere with a person's ability to live a normal life and meet daily responsibilities.

7. Which model of abnormality focuses on chemical imbalances and genetic vulnerabilities?

A) Behavioral model

B) Psychoanalytic model

C) Biological (Medical) model

D) Sociocultural model

Correct Answer: C) Biological (Medical) model

Rationale: The biological model views abnormal behavior as an illness caused by malfunctioning parts of the organism, primarily focusing on brain anatomy or chemistry.

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8. According to the behavioral perspective, abnormal behavior is:

A) A result of unresolved childhood conflicts

B) Learned through classical and operant conditioning

C) Caused by distorted thought processes

D) A spiritual crisis

Correct Answer: B) Learned through classical and operant conditioning

Rationale: Behaviorists believe that all behavior, whether normal or abnormal, is learned through interactions with the environment.

9. A nurse is assessing a patient using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). The primary purpose of the DSM-5 is to:

A) Dictate the specific nursing care plan

B) Explain the exact cause of all mental disorders

C) Provide standard criteria and language for diagnosing mental disorders

D) Outline pharmacological treatments

Correct Answer: C) Provide standard criteria and language for diagnosing mental disorders

Rationale: The DSM-5 is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals to ensure consistency in diagnosis.

10. In the continuum of mental health and mental illness, it is recognized that:

A) A person is either entirely healthy or completely ill

B) Mental health fluctuates dynamically throughout an individual's life

C) Mental illness is permanent once diagnosed

D) Only severe stressors cause movement along the continuum

Correct Answer: B) Mental health fluctuates dynamically throughout an individual's life

Rationale: Mental health is not a static state; individuals move back and forth along a continuum based on internal and external factors.

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11. Type A behavior pattern is most strongly associated with an increased risk for which physical condition?

A) Respiratory infections

B) Peptic ulcer disease

C) Coronary artery disease

D) Renal failure

Correct Answer: C) Coronary artery disease

Rationale: Type A personalities (characterized by competitiveness, time urgency, and hostility) have been historically linked to a higher incidence of cardiovascular issues.

12. A patient exhibits an extreme need for perfection, rigidity, and preoccupation with details. This behavior pattern aligns with:

A) Histrionic traits

B) Antisocial traits

C) Obsessive-compulsive traits

D) Schizoid traits

Correct Answer: C) Obsessive-compulsive traits

Rationale: Obsessive-compulsive personality patterns involve strict adherence to orderliness, perfectionism, and control.

13. Passive-aggressive behavior is best described as:

A) Openly confronting individuals with hostility

B) Indirectly expressing negative feelings instead of openly addressing them

C) Avoiding all social contact

D) Submitting completely to the will of others

Correct Answer: B) Indirectly expressing negative feelings instead of openly addressing them

Rationale: Passive-aggressive behavior involves indirect resistance to the demands of others and an avoidance of direct confrontation.

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14. A client who consistently seeks to be the center of attention, displays exaggerated emotions, and behaves theatrically is demonstrating which behavior pattern?

A) Narcissistic

B) Borderline

C) Histrionic

D) Dependent

Correct Answer: C) Histrionic

Rationale: Histrionic personality traits are characterized by a pattern of excessive attention-seeking behaviors and extreme emotionality.

15. 'Echolalia' is a behavior pattern where the patient:

A) Mimics the physical movements of others

B) Meaninglessly repeats the words spoken by others

C) Invents new words that have no meaning

D) Refuses to speak entirely

Correct Answer: B) Meaninglessly repeats the words spoken by others

Rationale: Echolalia is the involuntary, parrot-like repetition of words spoken by another person, often seen in schizophrenia or autism.

16. A patient with a history of avoiding relationships and preferring solitary activities, exhibiting emotional coldness, fits which behavior pattern?

A) Schizoid

B) Avoidant

C) Dependent

D) Paranoid

Correct Answer: A) Schizoid

Rationale: Schizoid traits involve a pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotional expression.

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17. 'Compulsions' in psychiatric terminology refer to:

A) Intrusive, unwanted thoughts

B) Repetitive behaviors or mental acts the individual feels driven to perform

C) False sensory perceptions

D) Fixed, false beliefs

Correct Answer: B) Repetitive behaviors or mental acts the individual feels driven to perform

Rationale: Compulsions are behaviors aimed at reducing the anxiety caused by obsessions (intrusive thoughts).

18. Manipulative behavior in a psychiatric setting is most often an attempt by the patient to:

A) Make friends with the staff

B) Express gratitude

C) Gain a sense of control over their environment or others

D) Help other patients

Correct Answer: C) Gain a sense of control over their environment or others

Rationale: Manipulation is often a maladaptive coping mechanism used to establish control, often stemming from underlying insecurity or personality disorders.

19. An individual who exhibits a pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others since age 15 displays traits of:

A) Antisocial behavior

B) Narcissistic behavior

C) Borderline behavior

D) Schizotypal behavior

Correct Answer: A) Antisocial behavior

Rationale: Antisocial personality traits include deceitfulness, impulsivity, irritability, and a lack of remorse for mistreating others.

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20. Agitated behavior in a patient with dementia is often triggered by:

A) Deep sleep

B) Unmet physical or emotional needs (e.g., pain, hunger, overstimulation)

C) High cognitive functioning

D) Reading a book

Correct Answer: B) Unmet physical or emotional needs (e.g., pain, hunger, overstimulation)

Rationale: Because patients with severe dementia cannot effectively communicate, agitation is often a behavioral expression of unmet needs or environmental discomfort.

21. Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) identifies three stages of stress response. Which is the correct order?

A) Resistance, Alarm, Exhaustion

B) Alarm, Exhaustion, Resistance

C) Alarm, Resistance, Exhaustion

D) Exhaustion, Alarm, Resistance

Correct Answer: C) Alarm, Resistance, Exhaustion

Rationale: The GAS begins with the Alarm reaction (fight or flight), followed by Resistance (attempting to adapt), and finally Exhaustion if the stress is prolonged.

22. During the 'Alarm' stage of the General Adaptation Syndrome, which physiological change occurs?

A) Decreased heart rate

B) Increased sympathetic nervous system activity

C) Pupil constriction

D) Increased gastrointestinal motility

Correct Answer: B) Increased sympathetic nervous system activity

Rationale: The alarm stage triggers the sympathetic nervous system, releasing epinephrine and norepinephrine, leading to increased heart rate and dilated pupils.

23. In the context of stress, what is 'eustress'?

A) Chronic, debilitating stress

B) Positive stress that motivates and enhances performance

C) Stress that causes physical illness

D) A complete lack of stress

Correct Answer: B) Positive stress that motivates and enhances performance

Rationale: Eustress is a healthy, positive form of stress that provides motivation and energy, such as planning a wedding or starting a new job.

24. A patient uses deep breathing and meditation to lower their heart rate when feeling overwhelmed. This is an example of:

A) Problem-focused coping

B) Emotion-focused coping

C) Maladaptive coping

D) Avoidance coping

Correct Answer: B) Emotion-focused coping

Rationale: Emotion-focused coping involves managing the emotional distress associated with a stressor, rather than changing the stressor itself.

25. Which statement best describes 'allostatic load'?

A) A temporary spike in cortisol

B) The wear and tear on the body caused by prolonged or excessive stress responses

C) The initial reaction to an acute injury

D) The body's ability to resist infection

Correct Answer: B) The wear and tear on the body caused by prolonged or excessive stress responses

Rationale: Allostatic load refers to the cumulative physiological burden exacted on the body through attempts to adapt to chronic stress.

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26. According to Richard Lazarus, 'primary appraisal' of a stressor involves determining:

A) What coping strategies are available

B) Whether the event is a threat, harm, or challenge

C) How others will view the stressor

D) Which defense mechanism to use

Correct Answer: B) Whether the event is a threat, harm, or challenge

Rationale: Primary appraisal is the individual's initial evaluation of the significance of an event (is it positive, negative, or neutral?).

27. A person who loses their job and immediately begins applying for new positions and updating their resume is utilizing:

A) Problem-focused coping

B) Denial

C) Emotion-focused coping

D) Regression

Correct Answer: A) Problem-focused coping

Rationale: Problem-focused coping involves actively taking steps to alter or eliminate the source of the stress.

28. Which physiological system is primarily responsible for the long-term stress response, including the release of cortisol?

A) Parasympathetic nervous system

B) Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis

C) Enteric nervous system

D) Somatic nervous system

Correct Answer: B) Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis

Rationale: The HPA axis controls the body's prolonged response to stress, resulting in the secretion of glucocorticoids like cortisol.

29. Adaptation to stress is deemed successful when the individual:

A) Completely forgets the stressful event

B) Maintains a state of physiological and psychological equilibrium

C) Develops a physical illness instead of a mental one

D) Isolates themselves from future stressors

Correct Answer: B) Maintains a state of physiological and psychological equilibrium

Rationale: Successful adaptation (homeostasis) means the individual copes with the stressor while maintaining overall well-being and functional capacity.

30. The 'Exhaustion' stage of Selye's GAS is characterized by:

A) Peak physical energy

B) Successful adaptation to the stressor

C) Depletion of resources, leading to illness or death

D) Lowered cortisol levels and relaxation

Correct Answer: C) Depletion of resources, leading to illness or death

Rationale: If stress is chronic and adaptation fails, the body's resources become depleted, making it vulnerable to disease and systemic failure.

31. A patient diagnosed with terminal cancer tells the nurse, 'I just have a minor infection; I'll be going back to work next week.' This is an example of:

A) Projection

B) Denial

C) Rationalization

D) Sublimation

Correct Answer: B) Denial

Rationale: Denial is the refusal to acknowledge the reality of a stressful or traumatic situation.

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32. A woman who is angry at her boss comes home and yells at her dog. Which defense mechanism is she using?

A) Displacement

B) Reaction formation

C) Introjection

D) Repression

Correct Answer: A) Displacement

Rationale: Displacement involves redirecting strong emotions (like anger) from the original source to a safer, substitute target.

33. Consciously and intentionally pushing an unpleasant thought or memory out of one's mind is known as:

A) Repression

B) Suppression

C) Regression

D) Dissociation

Correct Answer: B) Suppression

Rationale: Suppression is the conscious effort to put something out of mind, whereas repression is an unconscious process.

34. A student fails an exam and states, 'The questions were poorly written, and the teacher doesn't like me.' This reflects:

A) Sublimation

B) Rationalization

C) Undoing

D) Compensation

Correct Answer: B) Rationalization

Rationale: Rationalization involves creating logical, acceptable excuses to justify unacceptable feelings, behaviors, or failures.

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35. A person with deep-seated aggressive tendencies becomes a highly successful professional boxer. This is an example of:

A) Projection

B) Denial

C) Sublimation

D) Displacement

Correct Answer: C) Sublimation

Rationale: Sublimation is a mature defense mechanism where unacceptable impulses are channeled into socially acceptable and productive activities.

36. An adult patient who is hospitalized and feeling vulnerable begins insisting that the nurse feed him and bathe him, skills he is capable of doing himself. This is an example of:

A) Regression

B) Repression

C) Conversion

D) Projection

Correct Answer: A) Regression

Rationale: Regression is reverting to an earlier, more comforting stage of development or behavior in response to stress.

37. A husband who is harboring thoughts of infidelity constantly accuses his wife of flirting with other men. Which defense mechanism is operating?

A) Projection

B) Reaction formation

C) Displacement

D) Introjection

Correct Answer: A) Projection

Rationale: Projection is attributing one's own unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or motives onto another person.

38. A mother who deeply resents her unplanned child becomes overly protective and smothers the child with excessive affection. This represents:

A) Sublimation

B) Reaction formation

C) Undoing

D) Rationalization

Correct Answer: B) Reaction formation

Rationale: Reaction formation is converting an unacceptable feeling or impulse into its exact opposite to hide the true feeling.

39. Unconsciously blocking a traumatic childhood memory so that it cannot be recalled is an example of:

A) Suppression

B) Repression

C) Denial

D) Regression

Correct Answer: B) Repression

Rationale: Repression is the unconscious blocking of unacceptable thoughts, feelings, and impulses.

40. A man feels guilty about yelling at his wife, so he brings her a large bouquet of flowers on his way home. This behavior is called:

A) Compensation

B) Undoing

C) Rationalization

D) Isolation of affect

Correct Answer: B) Undoing

Rationale: Undoing is an attempt to 'take back' or cancel out an unacceptable behavior or thought through a compensatory action.

41. A high school student who is not academically gifted puts all his energy into becoming the star of the track team. This is an example of:

A) Compensation

B) Sublimation

C) Reaction formation

D) Displacement

Correct Answer: A) Compensation

Rationale: Compensation involves emphasizing strengths or excelling in one area to make up for perceived weaknesses in another.

42. A patient witnesses a horrific accident but talks about the event in a flat, clinical tone without displaying any emotion. Which mechanism is used?

A) Intellectualization

B) Undoing

C) Projection

D) Conversion

Correct Answer: A) Intellectualization

Rationale: Intellectualization (or isolation of affect) involves separating the emotional component from a traumatic event to avoid the pain.

43. A young boy adopts the mannerisms and beliefs of a beloved teacher he deeply admires. This mechanism is known as:

A) Projection

B) Identification

C) Displacement

D) Rationalization

Correct Answer: B) Identification

Rationale: Identification is the unconscious modeling of oneself upon another person's character and behavior.

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44. After a severe psychological trauma, a patient develops sudden paralysis of the legs with no physiological cause. This is an example of:

A) Somatization

B) Conversion

C) Malingering

D) Dissociation

Correct Answer: B) Conversion

Rationale: Conversion is the unconscious transformation of extreme anxiety or psychological conflict into a physical (motor or sensory) symptom.

45. A victim of a violent assault reports feeling as though they were floating above their body and watching the event happen to someone else. This is:

A) Repression

B) Denial

C) Dissociation

D) Splitting

Correct Answer: C) Dissociation

Rationale: Dissociation involves a temporary alteration in consciousness, memory, or identity, often separating oneself from the traumatic reality.

46. A patient with Borderline Personality Disorder views her primary nurse as 'the best nurse ever' one day, and 'the absolute worst nurse' the next day. This is:

A) Projection

B) Splitting

C) Reaction formation

D) Displacement

Correct Answer: B) Splitting

Rationale: Splitting is the inability to integrate the positive and negative qualities of oneself or others; people are seen as all good or all bad.

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47. Which of the following defense mechanisms is almost always considered adaptive and healthy?

A) Denial

B) Projection

C) Altruism

D) Displacement

Correct Answer: C) Altruism

Rationale: Altruism, along with sublimation and humor, is considered a mature, healthy defense mechanism that helps manage stress through service to others.

48. A teenager whose parents are going through a bitter divorce begins wetting the bed at night. The nurse identifies this as:

A) Repression

B) Regression

C) Sublimation

D) Conversion

Correct Answer: B) Regression

Rationale: Bed-wetting in an older child during extreme stress is a classic sign of regression to an earlier developmental stage.

49. Integrating the beliefs and values of another individual into one's own ego structure (e.g., a child internalizing parents' rules) is called:

A) Introjection

B) Projection

C) Sublimation

D) Displacement

Correct Answer: A) Introjection

Rationale: Introjection is deeply internalizing the ideas or voices of others, commonly parents or authority figures.

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50. When a person uses humor to cover up feelings of deep sadness or anxiety, they are using humor as a:

A) Pathological defense mechanism

B) Mature defense mechanism

C) Form of denial

D) Form of rationalization

Correct Answer: B) Mature defense mechanism

Rationale: Humor is generally categorized as a mature defense mechanism that helps individuals cope with difficult situations in a socially acceptable way.

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