

Source A: Nursing Advice Sheet [2005]

Stressed? Then read our expert guide to dealing with stress in nursing...

A nursing day involves a lot of stress. Whether working with gravely¹ ill patients or helping families cope with the loss of a loved one after death, nurses have to be there for almost every imaginable situation.

It is a job that requires energy on many levels. Physically, the job can be demanding with high levels of physical exertion², culminating in many aches and pains. Mentally, you are required to be 'on the ball', making crucial decisions and answering questions from patients and relatives. Emotionally, the impact is felt when you empathise and help people in an environment where there is pain and sadness. Additionally, the work situation may be characterised by resource limits, poor staffing and organisational change, which all add to the energy expended. 5 10

Work or Life?

Maintain a healthy work/life balance. Ask yourself "Do you live to work or work to live?" Use your free time to recharge your batteries. Remember to plan regular holidays and take them. Small treats like visits to the cinema or a meal at a restaurant will help you switch off and relax. 15

Being aware

Be aware of negative thinking when stressed. Instead of thinking 'I must never make a mistake' think more realistically, for example 'I am doing the best I can in tough situations'. Challenge the internal pressures by turning the musts into preferences, from 'I must complete this today' to 'I'd like to complete it today and will do what I can'. If you identify what you can and can't control, then you can learn to accept external pressures. After all, you are not expected to be superhuman! 20

Relax

Learning to relax is key to managing stress. This will tell your brain that the threat has gone and the 'fight or flight' response can be switched off. Think of the things that you enjoy that have a relaxing effect on you. For example, a long soak in the bath, a good book or a nature walk. If you treat yourself with more of these simple pleasures then you will find it easier to breathe. There are also meditation³ tapes available which can have a significant impact on learning relaxation skills. These skills can then be transferred to work situations when you feel tense. Relaxation will also help you sleep. 25 30

Get physical

Exercise helps to combat stress levels. Exercise burns up the excess adrenaline and releases feel-good hormones. If you enjoy keeping fit and this area of your life has been squeezed then make time for this again. If you're not used to exercising start small with what you enjoy – swims or a gentle work out with a class,- and build up to a level that suits you. Joining a club or gym can lead to new social horizons and keep you motivated. 35

Getting help

Counselling is often helpful as a way of giving yourself a regular space to reflect on the problem. You may decide to see a counsellor individually or you could join a group. Your workplace can provide access to a counsellor through their occupational health scheme. 40

Glossary

1. gravely seriously
2. exertion great effort
3. meditation thinking in a calm, relaxed way

Source B: from Florence Nightingale's (a nurse) diary, written during the Crimean War, detailing her experiences in a war hospital. [1855]

A message came to me to prepare for 510 wounded on our side of the Hospital who were arriving from the dreadful affair of the 5th November from Balaklava¹, in which battle were 1763 wounded and 442 killed, besides 96 officers wounded and 38 killed. We had but half an hour's notice before they began landing the wounded. Between one and 9 o'clock we had the mattresses stuffed, sewn up, laid down—alas! Only upon matting² on the floor—the men washed and put to bed, and all their wounds dressed. I wish I had more time. But oh! you Gentlemen of England who sit at Home in all the well-earned satisfaction of your successful Cases³, can have little Idea from reading the newspapers of the Horror and Misery (in a Military Hospital) of operating upon these dying, exhausted men. A London Hospital is a Garden of Flowers to it. 5 10

We live in one Tower of the Barrack.⁴ All the wounded have been laid down in two Corridors, with a line of Beds down each side, just room for one person to pass between. Yet in the midst of this appalling Horror (we are steeped up to our necks in blood) there is good, and I can truly say, like St. Peter, "It is good for us to be here" - though I doubt whether if St. Peter had been here, he would have said so. As I went on my night-rounds among the newly wounded that first night, there was not one murmur, not one groan, the strictest discipline - the most absolute silence and quiet prevailed - and I heard one man say, "I was dreaming of my friends at Home," and another said, "I was thinking of them." These poor fellows bear pain and mutilation with an unshrinking heroism which is really superhuman, and die, or are cut up without a complaint. 15 20

The wounded are now lying up to our very door, and we are landing 540 more wounded soon. I feel like a Brigadier General⁵, because 40 British females, whom I have with me, are more difficult to manage than 4000 men. Let no lady come out here who is not used to fatigue and privation.... Every ten minutes an Orderly runs, and we have to go and cram lint⁶ into the wound till a Surgeon can be sent for, and stop the Bleeding as well as we can. In all our corridor, I think we have not an average of three Limbs per man. And there are two Ships more "loading" at the Crimea with wounded—(this is our Phraseology). Then come the operations, and a melancholy⁷, not an encouraging list is this. They are all performed in the wards—no time to move them; one poor fellow exhausted with hæmorrhage⁸, has his leg amputated as a last hope, and dies ten minutes after the Surgeon has left him. Almost before the breath has left his body it is sewn up in its blanket, and carried away and buried the same day. We have no room for Corpses in the Wards. The Surgeons pass on to the next, an excision⁹ of the shoulder-joint, beautifully performed and going on well. Ball¹⁰ lodged just in the head of the joint and fracture starred all round. The next poor fellow has two Stumps for arms, and the next has lost an arm and a leg. As for the Balls they go in where they like and come out where they like and do as much harm as they can in passing. 25 30 35 40

glossary

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| 1. Balaklava - a city in Ukraine | 6. lint - a dressing made from cotton wool |
| 2. matting - floor covering made from hay | 7. melancholy - great sadness |
| 3. Cases - battles | 8. hæmorrhage - very bad bleeding |
| 4. Barrack - a building that houses soldiers | 9. excision - cutting off something |
| 5. Brigadier General - a very senior soldier | 10. ball - a heavy, round, lead bullet |

Q1. Read again **source A**, from **lines 1 to 10**.

Choose **four** statements below which are TRUE.

- Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true
- Choose a maximum of **four** statements.

- a) Nurses have to be prepared for any situation.
- b) Nurses need to have physical stamina.
- c) Nurses never get ill.
- d) Nurses do not like dealing with demanding patients.
- e) Nurses have to make serious decisions.
- f) Nurses can get sad when dealing with patients.
- g) Nurses have plenty of resources.

[4 marks]

Q2. You need to refer to **source A** and **source B** for this question:

Use details from **both** sources. Write a summary of the **difficulties of nursing** in the two different texts.

[8 marks]

Q3. You now need to refer **only** to **source B**.

How does the writer use language to explain the **conditions in the hospital**?

[12 marks]

Q4. For this question, you need to refer to the whole of **source A** together with the whole of **source B**.

Compare how each source conveys **the attitude to nursing**.

In your answer, you should:

- compare the different attitudes
- compare the methods used to convey the attitudes
- support your ideas with quotations from both texts.

[16 marks]