Psychological Skills for the Advanced Practice Nurse

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Aims of Session

• Briefly look at Australian Health demographics
• Understand Psychological Skills Training processes
• Focus on Attentional Quadrant grid
• Highlight importance of psychologically preparing nurses to provide optimal care and minimize risks
Australian Health Statistics

• Australia’s life expectancy at birth continues to rise and is among the highest in the world—almost 84 years for females and 79 years for males.
• Death rates are falling for many of our major health problems such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and injuries.
• Coronary heart disease causes the largest number of ‘lost years’ through death among males aged under 75 years, and breast cancer causes the most among females.
Diseases

- Cancer is Australia’s leading broad cause of disease burden (19% of the total), followed by cardiovascular disease (16%) and mental disorders (13%).
- Around 1 in 5 Australians aged 16–85 years has a mental disorder at some time in a 12-month period, including 1 in 4 of those aged 16–24 years.
- The burden of Type 2 diabetes is increasing and it is expected to become the leading cause of disease burden by 2023.
- The incidence of treated end-stage kidney disease is increasing, with diabetes as the main cause.
Westmead Hospital

- 4th busiest in Australia
- Opened in 1978
- 975 bed specialised referral hospital
- Population 1.5 million
- Has dental school and a unit for emotionally disturbed children
- 29% speak language other than English
Psychological Skills Training

• PST is a systematic and consistent practice of mental skills used to enhance performance.

• Common characteristics in athletes:
  • their sport is important to them and they are committed to being the best that they can be within the scope of their limitations – other life commitments, finances, time, and their natural ability.
  • They set high, realistic goals for themselves and train and play hard.
  • Their sport participation enriches their lives and they believe that what they get back is worth what they put into their sport.
Peak Performance

Under stimulated
Boredom
Apathy
Amotivation
Anergy

Over stimulated
Stress
Distress
Anxiety
Panic
9 Skills over Three Phases of Development

**Basic Skills**
- Attitude
- Motivation
- Goals and Commitment
- People Skills

**Preparatory Skills**
- Self-Talk
- Mental Imagery

**Performance Skills**
- Managing Anxiety
- Managing Emotions
- Attention and Concentration
Focusing attention

- Breadth of focus (width) is the amount of information that you attend to any one time. This is divided into either broad or narrow.
- Direction of focus (direction) is the location of what you are concentrating on: whether it is external (outside you) or internal (inside you).
- Different situations require different concentration skills. Psychologically-skilled people learn to switch to whatever concentration style is required for specific tasks.
Attentional Quadrant

- Broad - External
- Narrow - External
- Broad - Internal
- Narrow - Internal
Broad External

- Needed for looking at the whole situation
- attend well to rapidly changing situations
- taking in a lot of information.
- susceptible to information overload affecting decision making efficacy.
Broad Internal

• Thinkers
• Needed to ensure they have prepared themselves well to perform
• quick to make tactical adjustment
• can get caught up in analyzing, especially when things are not going well.
• May doubt their own skills and not challenge themselves
• Tend to outguess themselves and miss important cues.
Narrow External

- Needed when focusing on patient and not on distractions of noise, interruptions, own feelings
- People who perform any task, in which the focus must be pinpointed, perform better with this type of attentional style.
- Problems occur when the environment changes and decisions need to be made about how to respond to the changes.
Narrow Internal

• Needed to ensure own homeostatic requirements are met
• This style is conclusive for diagnosing performance or strategy errors, but such diagnostic tendencies carry the risk of becoming highly critical self-analysis
• People with this style perform better in roles which change takes place slowly and in obvious ways.
Improving Concentration

• Concentration is affected by fatigue. The higher level of fitness and health you maintain, the less mistakes you will make

• Use specific attentional cues to trigger you to concentrate
  o Listening cues
  o Visual cues
  o Physical cues

• Task-oriented goal-setting
Conclusion

• Higher expectations on effective and efficient delivery of service
• PST is an essential component in developing advanced practice nursing that will impact on performance, recruitment and retention
• There are 9 Psychological skills that enhance performance, over 3 phases of development
• 4 quadrants of attention for concentration skills
• It is important to prepare ourselves psychologically if we are going to use our crafts and skills to optimise performance
References

• Australian College of Applied Psychology. (200-2004). Manuals from subjects in Athletic Counselling, Stress and performance and applied sport psychology
• AIHW 2010. Australia's health 2010. Cat. no. AUS 122. Canberra: AIHW.
Questions and Discussion