

# Stress and Adaptation Nursing Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

**Remember:** successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

## **1. Start with a Diagnostic Review**

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

## **2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions**

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.**

## **3. Learn from the Explanations**

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

## **4. Track Your Progress**

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

## **5. Simulate the Real Exam**

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

## **6. Repeat and Review**

**Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

## Questions

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- 1. Which of the following is an adaptive coping behavior?**
  - A. Seeking advice**
  - B. Overeating**
  - C. Oversleeping**
  - D. Exercising**
  
- 2. Which factor most influences the effectiveness of coping strategies during illness?**
  - A. Age**
  - B. Time of day**
  - C. Availability of social support**
  - D. Color of hospital walls**
  
- 3. Which problem is characterized by physical symptoms with no known organic cause?**
  - A. Anxiety and flashbacks to a traumatic event**
  - B. Inability to cope effectively in the workplace**
  - C. Physical symptoms with no known organic cause**
  - D. Exposing self to other stable environments**
  
- 4. Which coping approach involves altering the stressor itself, such as changing jobs to reduce stress?**
  - A. Alter the stressor**
  - B. Adapt to the stressor**
  - C. Avoid the stressor**
  - D. Denial**
  
- 5. Which defense mechanism involves the unconscious adoption of the ideas or attitudes of others?**
  - A. Introjection**
  - B. Identification**
  - C. Displacement**
  - D. Minimization**

- 6. Which gland releases ACTH as part of the GAS alarm stage cascade?**
- A. Hypothalamus**
  - B. Anterior Pituitary**
  - C. Adrenal Cortex**
  - D. Adrenal Medulla**
- 7. Which defense mechanism involves separating painful events from the conscious mind?**
- A. Denial**
  - B. Displacement**
  - C. Projection**
  - D. Dissociation**
- 8. Which order correctly lists the stages of General Adaptation Syndrome?**
- A. Alarm, Exhaustion, Resistance**
  - B. Alarm, Resistance, Exhaustion**
  - C. Resistance, Alarm, Exhaustion**
  - D. Exhaustion, Alarm, Resistance**
- 9. Which statement about stressors is accurate?**
- A. Stressors are the same for all individuals.**
  - B. Stressors change throughout the life span.**
  - C. Stressors do not vary with situation.**
  - D. Stressors always lead to illness.**
- 10. Which term represents stress that has a negative effect on a person?**
- A. Time**
  - B. Anticipatory**
  - C. Distress**
  - D. Situational**

## **Answers**

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1. D
2. C
3. C
4. A
5. A
6. B
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. C

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which of the following is an adaptive coping behavior?**

- A. Seeking advice**
- B. Overeating**
- C. Oversleeping**
- D. Exercising**

Coping in a healthy way means using strategies that reduce distress without creating new problems. Exercising fits this well because it actively lowers the body's stress response and lifts mood through endorphin release, improves sleep, and boosts energy and a sense of control. These physiological and psychological benefits help people cope more effectively with stress over time and support resilience. In contrast, overeating or oversleeping can provide temporary relief but often lead to additional health issues and mood problems, making them less adaptive. Seeking advice is helpful for social support, but exercise uniquely produces direct, ongoing benefits to stress regulation and physical well-being.

**2. Which factor most influences the effectiveness of coping strategies during illness?**

- A. Age**
- B. Time of day**
- C. Availability of social support**
- D. Color of hospital walls**

Availability of social support plays a central role in how effectively coping strategies work during illness. When people have emotional backing, practical help, and trustworthy information from others, they feel less overwhelmed and more capable of applying coping efforts. Supportive networks can reinforce adaptive behaviors, encourage adherence to treatment plans, assist with problem-solving, and help reinterpret illness-related stress in a manageable way. This reduces anxiety, improves mood, and enhances self-efficacy, all of which amplify the impact of coping strategies. Age can shape coping styles but does not determine how effective those strategies are when support is available. Time of day might influence energy or symptoms but is not a primary driver of coping effectiveness. The color of hospital walls can affect mood superficially, yet it does not drive the core ability to cope. Thus, social support stands out as the key factor influencing how well coping strategies work during illness.

**3. Which problem is characterized by physical symptoms with no known organic cause?**

- A. Anxiety and flashbacks to a traumatic event**
- B. Inability to cope effectively in the workplace**
- C. Physical symptoms with no known organic cause**
- D. Exposing self to other stable environments**

The question is testing the idea of somatic symptom phenomena—physical complaints that arise from psychological distress rather than an identifiable medical illness. When someone experiences real, distressing physical symptoms but medical tests find no organic cause, this pattern points to a somatic symptom disorder. The key is that the symptoms are real to the person and cause significant impairment, even though there isn't a detectable physical disease driving them. In this scenario, the description "physical symptoms with no known organic cause" fits that pattern best. It isn't about reexperiencing trauma or flashbacks, which would suggest a trauma-focused condition; it isn't simply a coping deficit at work, nor an unrelated environmental change. The emphasis is on symptoms that are bodily in nature but lack a medical explanation, indicating a need to address underlying psychological stress and how the person manages it. Nursing care would involve validating the patient's experience, exploring psychosocial stressors contributing to symptoms, and coordinating care with mental health professionals. The goal is to provide consistent, supportive care while avoiding unnecessary repeated medical testing, and to teach coping and stress-management strategies that can reduce symptom severity.

**4. Which coping approach involves altering the stressor itself, such as changing jobs to reduce stress?**

- A. Alter the stressor**
- B. Adapt to the stressor**
- C. Avoid the stressor**
- D. Denial**

Problem-focused coping targets the source of stress by actively changing the situation itself. When the stressor is controllable, altering it often leads to the greatest reduction in stress because you remove or lessen the cause rather than just managing your reaction to it. In the example, changing jobs to reduce stress is exactly that—you modify the environment to prevent the stress from happening in the first place. Adapt to the stressor, by contrast, is about adjusting your feelings or accepting the situation rather than changing it; it's more about emotional adjustment. Avoiding the stressor means staying away from the source, which can provide short-term relief but doesn't resolve the underlying issue. Denial is a defense mechanism that involves ignoring or minimizing the stressor, which also fails to address the problem.

**5. Which defense mechanism involves the unconscious adoption of the ideas or attitudes of others?**

- A. Introjection**
- B. Identification**
- C. Displacement**
- D. Minimization**

This defense mechanism involves unconsciously taking in the ideas or attitudes of someone else and making them part of your own mental framework. It helps explain why a person might adopt another's values as if they were their own, often to reduce anxiety or feel connected to that other person. For example, a child may absorb parental rules and treat them as their own inner voice, guiding behavior from within. This differs from identification, which is more about modeling oneself after someone and adopting their traits as part of the self-concept, and from displacement, which shifts emotions from the original source to a safer target, and from minimization, which downplays the importance of a situation.

**6. Which gland releases ACTH as part of the GAS alarm stage cascade?**

- A. Hypothalamus**
- B. Anterior Pituitary**
- C. Adrenal Cortex**
- D. Adrenal Medulla**

During the alarm stage of the GAS, the brain activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. The hypothalamus releases corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), which stimulates the anterior pituitary to secrete adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH). ACTH then travels to the adrenal cortex, prompting cortisol release to mobilize energy and support the stress response. The anterior pituitary is the source of ACTH in this cascade, not the hypothalamus (which releases CRH upstream), nor the adrenal cortex (which releases cortisol in response to ACTH), nor the adrenal medulla (which releases catecholamines).

**7. Which defense mechanism involves separating painful events from the conscious mind?**

- A. Denial**
- B. Displacement**
- C. Projection**
- D. Dissociation**

The main idea is how the mind uses defenses to cope with distress by altering awareness. Dissociation specifically separates painful memories or experiences from conscious thought, memory, or sense of self. This can look like gaps in memory for the event, feeling unreal or detached from one's surroundings, or acting as if watching oneself from outside. Such separation helps the individual cope when the trauma is overwhelming. By contrast, denial is simply refusing to accept reality, displacement redirects emotions to a safer target, and projection attributes one's own unacceptable feelings to someone else. So dissociation best fits the idea of removing the painful event from conscious awareness.

**8. Which order correctly lists the stages of General Adaptation Syndrome?**

- A. Alarm, Exhaustion, Resistance
- B. Alarm, Resistance, Exhaustion**
- C. Resistance, Alarm, Exhaustion
- D. Exhaustion, Alarm, Resistance

General Adaptation Syndrome unfolds in three stages. First, alarm reaction, where the body detects the stressor and triggers the fight-or-flight response through the sympathetic nervous system and HPA axis. Next comes the resistance phase, as the body mobilizes resources to cope with the ongoing stress and tries to restore balance. If the stress persists, resources become depleted and the organism enters exhaustion, marked by diminished function and increased vulnerability to illness. Thus, the correct sequence is alarm, resistance, exhaustion. The other orderings would place depletion before adequate mobilization or skip the coping phase, which doesn't fit how the body adapts to prolonged stress.

**9. Which statement about stressors is accurate?**

- A. Stressors are the same for all individuals.
- B. Stressors change throughout the life span.**
- C. Stressors do not vary with situation.
- D. Stressors always lead to illness.

Stressors are demands that require a person to adapt, and they change across the life span. As people move through different ages and life roles—teenager, student, caregiver, worker, retiree—the kinds of demands they face and how stressful they feel shift. A teen may be stressed by exams and peer dynamics, a parent may struggle with balancing work and family, and an older adult may cope with health concerns or bereavement. The impact of a stressor also depends on personal resources, health, support, and context, so the same event can be more or less stressful for different people. In addition, not every stressor leads to illness; many people adapt successfully through coping strategies and resilience. Because stressors evolve with development and circumstances, the statement that stressors change throughout the life span is the most accurate.

**10. Which term represents stress that has a negative effect on a person?**

- A. Time
- B. Anticipatory
- C. Distress**
- D. Situational

Stress can be either positive and motivating (often called eustress) or negative and harmful. The term that describes stress that has a negative effect on a person is distress. Distress occurs when demands surpass a person's coping resources, leading to adverse mental and physical outcomes such as anxiety, sleep problems, concentration difficulties, irritability, and physical symptoms like headaches or increased heart rate. While anticipatory stress refers to anxiety about future events and situational stress describes stress arising from a specific situation, neither term by itself specifies the negative impact as clearly as distress does.

## Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://stressandadaptationnursing.examzify.com>**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**

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