

# 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 defense mechanism involves the unconscious adoption of the ideas or attitudes of others?**
  - A. Introjection**
  - B. Identification**
  - C. Displacement**
  - D. Minimization**
  
- 2. Which gland releases ACTH as part of the GAS alarm stage cascade?**
  - A. Hypothalamus**
  - B. Anterior Pituitary**
  - C. Adrenal Cortex**
  - D. Adrenal Medulla**
  
- 3. Which theory emphasizes stress as a process including internal and external demands and resources?**
  - A. Stress as stimulus (Holmes and Rahe)**
  - B. Stress as transaction (Lazarus)**
  - C. Stress as response (Selye)**
  - D. Stress as process including internal and external demands and resources (Pearlin)**
  
- 4. The hospitalized client states concern about discharge timing and worry about missing work. This illustrates which stress concept?**
  - A. This is an example of eustress and no intervention is necessary.**
  - B. This is an example of distress and could affect the client's health status.**
  - C. This is an example of developmental stress and the client should talk to someone his own age.**
  - D. This is an example of psychological stress and the client should be placed on antidepressants.**

- 5. To consider a client in crisis, which factor must be present?**
- A. Presence of physiological symptoms**
  - B. Event that has drastically changed a client's life**
  - C. Usual coping mechanisms are ineffective**
  - D. Event is perceived as a threat to the client**
- 6. A client is scheduled for major surgery tomorrow and appears anxious about the lack of family visit. Which nurse's question would best determine the level of anxiety?**
- A. Do you have questions about the surgery tomorrow?**
  - B. Would you like for me to call a family member to come support you?**
  - C. Would you like to talk with another client who had the same surgery?**
  - D. You seem worried about something. Would it help to talk about it?**
- 7. Which defense mechanism uses cognitive reasoning to block or avoid feelings about a painful incident?**
- A. Rationalization**
  - B. Denial**
  - C. Intellectualization**
  - D. Projection**
- 8. Which defense mechanism involves excessively apologizing or making amends to reduce guilt?**
- A. Repression**
  - B. Undoing**
  - C. Regression**
  - D. Denial**
- 9. Which statement best describes Local Adaptation Syndrome?**
- A. Response to stress involving a specific body part, tissue, or organ**
  - B. System-wide response to stress**
  - C. Chronic adaptation across multiple organ systems**
  - D. No response to local injury**

**10. What term describes coping strategies that are healthy choices and directly reduce negative effects of stress?**

- A. Maladaptive**
- B. Avoidant**
- C. Adaptive**
- D. Passive**

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## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. 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.

**2. 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).

**3. Which theory emphasizes stress as a process including internal and external demands and resources?**

- A. Stress as stimulus (Holmes and Rahe)**
- B. Stress as transaction (Lazarus)**
- C. Stress as response (Selye)**
- D. Stress as process including internal and external demands and resources (Pearlin)**

This item is testing the idea that stress is a dynamic process shaped by the demands placed on a person and the resources available to meet them. Pearlin's stress process model describes stress as an ongoing interaction where internal demands (like personal roles and expectations) and external demands (such as work, caregiving, or family strains) create stressors, while resources (coping skills, social support, finances) help buffer or mediate their impact. How a person appraises these demands and uses resources to cope influences health and well-being over time, which is why this theory best fits the description of stress as a process involving internal and external demands and resources. In contrast, the stimulus view treats stress as a count of life events, the transaction view centers on appraisal of the situation, and the response view focuses on physiological reactions to stressors, rather than the ongoing resource-mediated process.

**4. The hospitalized client states concern about discharge timing and worry about missing work. This illustrates which stress concept?**

- A. This is an example of eustress and no intervention is necessary.**
- B. This is an example of distress and could affect the client's health status.**
- C. This is an example of developmental stress and the client should talk to someone his own age.**
- D. This is an example of psychological stress and the client should be placed on antidepressants.**

The key idea is recognizing a negative stress response that can affect health. When the hospitalized client worries about discharge timing and missing work, that concern is distress—an uncomfortable, maladaptive reaction to a threat to well-being. Distress can disrupt sleep, focus, and adherence to care plans, and over time it can impair healing and overall health status. This is not eustress, which is positive stress that motivates and enhances performance. It isn't developmental stress tied to a specific life stage or transition, which would involve challenges related to aging, puberty, or similar milestones. While the situation creates psychological strain, the scenario calls for addressing the negative impact on health rather than labeling it as a mood disorder requiring antidepressants.

**5. To consider a client in crisis, which factor must be present?**

- A. Presence of physiological symptoms**
- B. Event that has drastically changed a client's life**
- C. Usual coping mechanisms are ineffective**
- D. Event is perceived as a threat to the client**

The key idea is that a crisis happens when stress overwhelms a person's usual coping responses. The factor that must be present is that usual coping mechanisms are ineffective. If the person cannot use their normal strategies to manage the stressor and to return to or maintain functioning, distress escalates and a crisis state results. Simply experiencing a disruptive event or perceiving a threat isn't enough on its own; many people can cope with tough situations if they can rely on their usual skills, supports, and resources. When coping fails, intervention is needed to restore equilibrium by reducing the stressor's impact, expanding coping options, and mobilizing support.

**6. A client is scheduled for major surgery tomorrow and appears anxious about the lack of family visit. Which nurse's question would best determine the level of anxiety?**

- A. Do you have questions about the surgery tomorrow?**
- B. Would you like for me to call a family member to come support you?**
- C. Would you like to talk with another client who had the same surgery?**
- D. You seem worried about something. Would it help to talk about it?**

The main idea being tested is using therapeutic communication to assess a patient's anxiety by inviting them to share what they're feeling. The line that acknowledges the patient's visible worry and opens the door to discussion does two crucial things: it validates the emotion and it invites the patient to express specifics about what's causing the anxiety. This approach helps the nurse gauge how intense the anxiety is and what needs are driving it, whether information gaps, reassurance, or social support. Why this is best: by saying "You seem worried about something. Would it help to talk about it?" the nurse demonstrates empathy, avoids judgment, and uses an open-ended prompt. It shifts the interaction from a yes/no check of concerns to a conversation that reveals the underlying worries, enabling targeted support before surgery. The other options don't assess anxiety as effectively: asking if the patient has questions about the surgery addresses knowledge needs but not the emotional state; offering to call a family member assumes a need for social support without assessing its relevance or the patient's comfort level; suggesting talking with another patient could be comforting but doesn't directly explore the individual's personal fears and may raise confidentiality issues.

**7. Which defense mechanism uses cognitive reasoning to block or avoid feelings about a painful incident?**

**A. Rationalization**

**B. Denial**

**C. Intellectualization**

**D. Projection**

Intellectualization involves using thinking and analysis to shield oneself from emotional distress. By focusing on facts, theories, or practical steps related to a painful incident, the emotional impact is minimized and the person avoids the accompanying feelings. For example, someone dealing with severe news might immerse themselves in statistics, treatment options, and research rather than allowing themselves to feel sadness or fear. This cognitive processing to distance from emotion is what sets intellectualization apart from other defenses. Denial would involve refusing to acknowledge the event, rather than processing it cognitively. Rationalization uses logical excuses to justify or minimize the emotional impact, rather than simply focusing on objective analysis. Projection attributes one's own feelings to someone else. In this question, the emphasis on using cognitive reasoning to block feelings points to intellectualization as the best fit.

**8. Which defense mechanism involves excessively apologizing or making amends to reduce guilt?**

**A. Repression**

**B. Undoing**

**C. Regression**

**D. Denial**

When guilt drives someone to try to counteract their feeling, they may perform a compensatory action to "undo" the harm. That's undoing. The behavior of excessively apologizing or making amends is a classic example: the person hopes that by overdoing the corrective act, the inner guilt will diminish and the anxiety will pass. This differs from repression, which would push the guilt-inducing thought out of awareness; regression, which would involve returning to earlier, childlike behaviors; and denial, which would involve refusing to acknowledge the wrongdoing or its consequences. Undoing is specifically about counterbalancing the guilt through a compensatory action, such as apologizing or trying to make things right.

**9. Which statement best describes Local Adaptation Syndrome?**

- A. Response to stress involving a specific body part, tissue, or organ**
- B. System-wide response to stress**
- C. Chronic adaptation across multiple organ systems**
- D. No response to local injury**

Local adaptation syndrome is a localized response to stress affecting a single body area rather than the whole organism. When a part of the body is injured or irritated, the body mounts a localized inflammatory or immune response at that site, leading to signs such as redness, warmth, swelling, and pain in the affected tissue. This contrasts with a general adaptation syndrome, which involves system-wide changes across multiple organ systems driven by hormones and autonomic responses. The statement that best describes local adaptation syndrome is the one that specifies a response confined to a specific body part, tissue, or organ.

**10. What term describes coping strategies that are healthy choices and directly reduce negative effects of stress?**

- A. Maladaptive**
- B. Avoidant**
- C. Adaptive**
- D. Passive**

Adaptive coping describes strategies that are healthy choices and directly reduce the negative effects of stress. These approaches actively address the stressor or regulate the emotional response in ways that support functioning. They include problem-focused methods like planning and taking concrete steps, as well as emotion-focused methods such as seeking social support, reframing thoughts, and relaxation. By using adaptive coping, the body's stress response is tempered and functioning is maintained or restored. In contrast, maladaptive coping harms or worsens outcomes, avoidant coping evades the problem without solving it, and passive coping implies giving up. So, the best term for healthy strategies that directly reduce stress effects is adaptive coping.

## 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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