

Family Hardiness

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Family Hardiness

- Families faced with stress
 - What happens in the family?
 - What can we, as nurses, do to help families during times of stress?
 - What can we, as nurses, learn from families to care for ourselves during times of stress?

Family Hardiness

- What do we know about families?
 - Strong, stable families
 - Have the capacity for physical, spiritual and psychological recovery when faced with stress
 - In the research literature this is called **RESILIENCY**

Family Hardiness

- During times of stress:
 - Some families endure life's events with few adjustments
 - Some families falter but eventually endure
 - Some families struggle and eventually fall apart over time

Family Hardiness

- How can we identify when a family needs help?
 - Family Assessment Tools
 - Calgary Family Assessment Model (CFAM)
(Wright & Leahey, 2001)
 - Friedman Family Assessment Model
(Friedman, M., 1998)

Family Hardiness

- Assessment of the family
 - Thriving- strong, stable, balanced and in harmony
 - Safe- somewhat vulnerable, unbalanced
 - At risk- susceptible to deterioration, unstable, unbalanced
 - In crisis- unstable, disoriented, disorganized, fragile

Family Hardiness

- **Family Resiliency**- capacity of the family to retain, maintain or regain their ability to function after being challenged by events that arise in the course of family life.
 - **Protective Factors**
 - **Recovery Factors**

Family Hardiness

- Protective Factors
 - Family time and routines
 - Family celebrations
 - Family traditions
 - Family hardiness

Family Hardiness

■ Recovery Factors

- Family integration
- Family support
- Family self esteem and confidence
- Family advocacy
- Family meaning

Family Hardiness

- Family Hardiness is a Protective Factor
 - Comprised of three components:
 - Commitment
 - Control
 - Challenge

Family Hardiness

- Commitment:
 - Family works together through a shared commitment to each other and to the task at hand

Family Hardiness

- Control:
 - Family perceives themselves as having at least some control over what happens in their lives

Family Hardiness

- Challenge:
 - Family views challenge as an opportunity for change and growth rather than as a negative

Research on Family Resiliency

- What do we know from the research on Family Resiliency?
 - Families need Protective Factors to help them prevent or manage stress (for example, family hardiness)
 - Families need Recovery Factors to help them recover or regain family functioning after experiencing stress

Research on Family Resiliency

- Family Hardiness is a strong Protective Factor for families experiencing stress
 - Families who are committed to each other, who believe they have some control over their lives and who view challenges as an opportunity for growth and change are more likely to be hardy and therefore resilient when faced with stress.

Research on Family Resiliency

- In my own study, Mothers with Chronic Illness and their Spouse/Partner: Uncertainty, Family Hardiness, and Psychological Wellbeing:
 - Family Hardiness was a significant predictor of Psychological Wellbeing for both mothers and their spouse/partners.

Implications for Nursing

- Develop interventions to strengthen family hardiness when working with families
 - Strengthen the CONTROL component of Family Hardiness
 - Provide families opportunities to know they are in control of their lives such as involving them in decision making, providing them with the necessary information to make decisions, involving families in care giving of loved ones, etc.

Implications for Nursing

- Strengthen the COMMITMENT component of Family Hardiness
 - Encourage family members to work together to solve problems, to communicate with each other, to be there for each other, to give space for families to meet, to encourage families to help each other in times of stress, etc.

Implications for Nursing

- Strengthen the CHALLENGE component of Family Hardiness
 - Help the family to view the illness as an opportunity for growth, point out where they have developed strengths during the process of managing the stress, how they have developed new, better ways of coping to deal with stress

What does this mean for nurses as caregivers?

- Before family hardiness, there was individual hardiness
 - As nurses, in order to care for others we need to also care for ourselves, to possess individual hardiness
 - We need to pay attention to ways to increase our own individual hardiness
 - Control
 - Commitment
 - Challenge

Nurses as Care Providers

- **Commitment**-Strengthen your own ability to make *commitments* to each other---nurses work together through a shared commitment to each other and to the task at hand, work together to solve problems, communicate with each other, be there for each other, help each other in times of stress.

Nurses as Care Providers

- **Control**- Strengthen your own ability to *control* life events--- be in control over your own life, know what you can and cannot do, set priorities for yourself, simplify your life in order to feel more in control over what you can do.

Nurses as Care Providers

- **Challenges-** Strengthen your ability to view *challenges* as opportunities for change and growth---learn where you have developed strengths during the process of managing stress, learn new, better ways of coping to deal with stress and use those ways of coping in times of stress, give yourself credit for successfully managing stress during your life

Conclusion

- In order to promote family hardiness we must first possess individual hardiness
- Nurses must care for themselves in order to care for others