

# **Trait Anxiety and Hardiness among Junior Baccalaureate Nursing students living in a Stressful Environment**



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# Learning Objectives

- The learner will be able to clarify the concepts **personality hardiness** and **trait anxiety** and their relatedness to stressful life events.
- The learner will be able to explain the role of nursing educators in empowering and supporting students in stressful situations.



# **Introduction**

**The nursing profession places great emphasis on the ability of nurses to make sound judgments and function effectively in a variety of complex, unexpected situations, in order to protect patients' safety and rights.**

# **Literature review**

**The findings of stress research have suggested that stressful life events influence the average person's normal routine. Increasing levels of stress tends to provoke negative reactions such as somatic, psychological, and physiological effects.**



## **Literature review (Cont.)**

**Kobasa suggested that personality structure may foster staying healthy despite considerable stress, distinguishing individuals who became ill due to stress from those who experienced high degrees of stress without falling ill. This personality difference is described as **hardiness**.**

# Hardiness

A global personality construct of 3 interrelated components:

**Commitment** the individual's tendency to be actively involved in whatever he is doing and to show interest and curiosity concerning life and its events.

**Control** the tendency to believe and act as though one can influence the course of life events.

**Challenge** the individual's belief that life changes are positive phenomena, facilitating personal growth and development rather than threats.

(Kobasa, 1979)



# Trait anxiety

**An inborn character of an individual.**

**Individuals with high trait anxiety levels are more anxiety-prone because they perceive more situations as dangerous or threatening than individuals with low trait anxiety levels.**

**(Spielberger, 1979)**





Individuals with high **trait anxiety levels** are more **vulnerable to stress** and tend to respond more frequently and with more intense state anxiety reactions than do individuals who are low in trait anxiety levels.



(Spielberger, 1979)



**Baccalaureate nursing education is stressful.  
The stress encompasses a range of academic,  
clinical, personal, social, environmental  
reasons.**



## **Main stressors among nursing students**

- Amount of content to be learned
  - Studying for examinations
- Not knowing how to prepare for examinations
  - Educational climate
  - Preparing for clinical experiences
  - Perceived lack of clinical knowledge
- Caring for seriously ill patients and their families
- Requirement to successfully pass course before progressing in the program
  - Lack of leisure time
  - Balance between work and life



**Student nurses experience sources of stress daily in the educational settings with feelings such as**

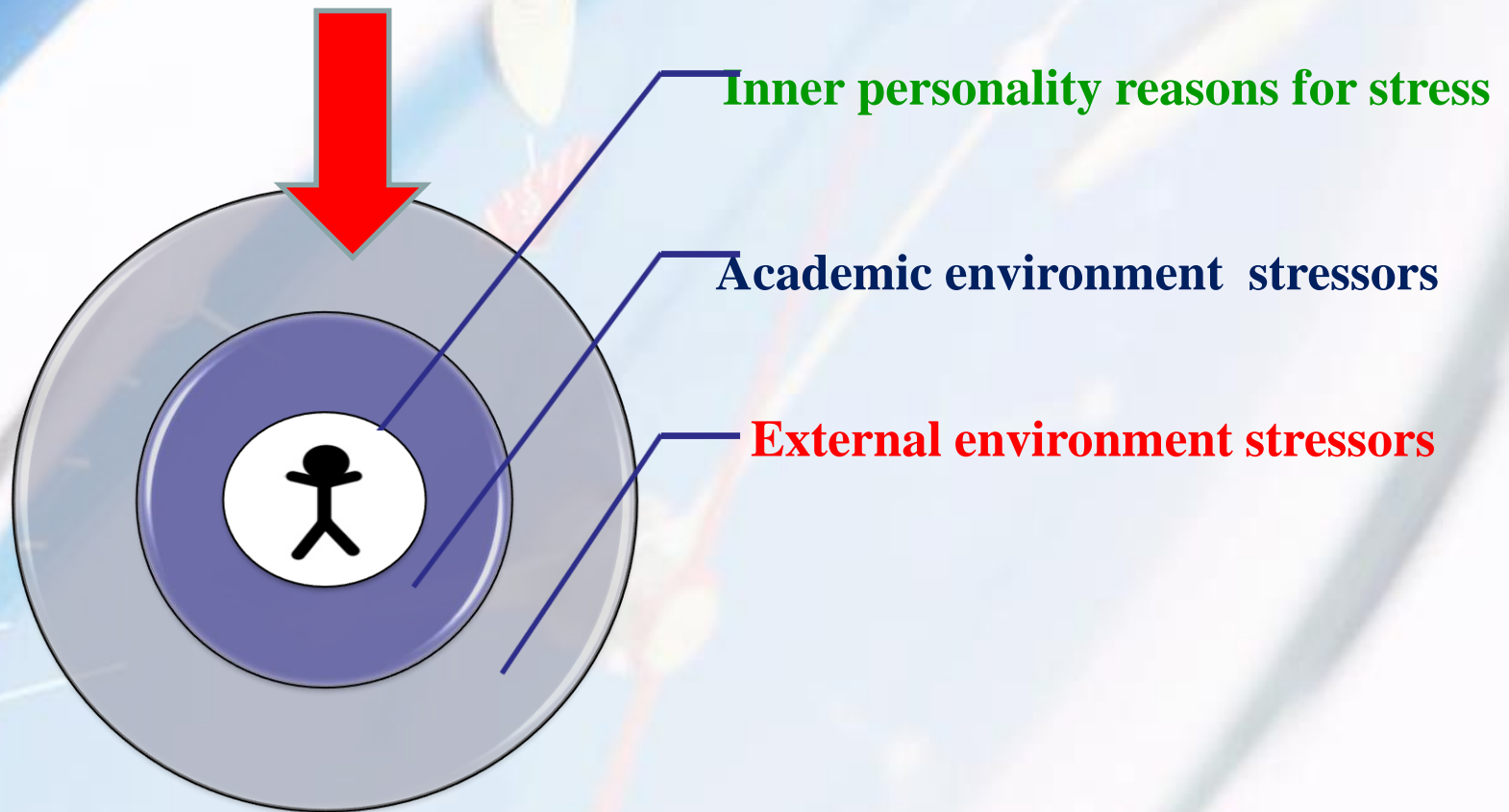
**Fear**

**Frustration**

**Feelings of inability**



**The present study relates to the influence of exposure  
to a stressful environment  
(not related to educational stressors)**



## Research purpose

To examine two personality characteristics, **hardiness** and **trait anxiety**, among junior baccalaureate nursing students living and studying in a stressful environment.

with the aim of identifying their inner strength and supporting them in their ability to cope effectively.

# Methodology

- **Design:** Cross-sectional study.
- **Sample:** 95 junior baccalaureate nursing students

A total of 86 responses were obtained,  
(a return rate of 90.5%)

- **Instrument:** 3-part structured questionnaire.

Data were collected at the beginning of the  
academic year 2015.



# The questionnaire

- 1) **Personality hardiness** was measured with **The Hardiness Questionnaire** (Kobasa, 1979).
- 2) **Trait anxiety** was measured with the **Spilberger Questionnaire** (1970).
- 3) **Socio-demographic** data.

# Reliability

Alpha Cronbach

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<b>Trait anxiety</b>	<b>(20 items)</b>	<b>.88</b>
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<b>Hardiness</b>	<b>(50 items)</b>	<b>.81</b>
<b>(total score)</b>		

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<b>Challenge</b>		<b>.53</b>
<b>Control</b>		<b>.66</b>
<b>Commitment</b>		<b>.77</b>

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# Results





## **Sample profile (N=86)**

- \* Gender – the majority (91%) females**
- \* Age - ranged from 20– 24 years**
- \* Family status – 74.4% single**
- \* Military / National service - 90%**
- \* Place of birth - 72% born in Israel  
24% former USSR**
- \* Place of Residence - 65% in or around Ashkelon**

## Summary measures of study variables (N = 86)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
<b>*Trait anxiety (total score)</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>.37</b>
<b>**Hardiness (total score)</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>5.16</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>.44</b>
<b>Challenge</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>4.94</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>.45</b>
<b>Control</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>5.44</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>.47</b>
<b>Commitment</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>.52</b>

*\* Trait Anxiety scores ranged from 1 (almost never) to 4 (almost always)*

*\*\* Hardiness scores ranged from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much)*



## **Relationship between personality measures.**

**A significant negative correlation was found between personality hardiness and trait anxiety ( $p = .000$ ).  
Students with higher anxiety scores gave lower personality hardiness scores.**



## **Relationship between personality measures and demographic characteristics.**

**Of all background characteristics only place of residence was found significantly correlated with hardiness ( $p = .048$ ).**

**Students who lived in the city of Ashkelon or within 30 km radius, a target to rocket attacks, got lower scores of hardiness than others.**

**Singles were found with higher trait anxiety levels than married students, with borderline significance ( $p = .078$ ).**

## **conclusions**

**The results reveal that despite living in an unstable stressful environment, junior student nurses demonstrated relatively low T- anxiety scores and above average scores of personality hardiness.**

**Explanation for the above mid scores may be related to coping mechanisms developed before and during the military / national service and the fact that most of them still live with their supporting families**



**❖ Hardiness personality construct is actively developed through a dynamic process**

**(Moddi, 2008).**

**❖ Review of hardiness literature suggests several hardiness educational interventions required to enhance coping strategies and assure long term effect.**

# **Implications**

**Educators play an important role in increasing personal hardiness.**

**High hardiness approach needs to be encouraged and supported by faculty with educational programs / interventions that empower the students.**



## **Educational climate characterized by:**

- **Social support, feedbacks, expressing feelings**
  - **Safe educational and clinical environment**
- **Exercising skills and competencies, preparing for clinical experiences**
  - **Teaching conflict management**
  - **Teaching coping mechanisms**
  - **Teaching relaxation / meditation**

**Hardiness can be learned.**

(Judkins et al.,2007)



***Thank you***