Tips for Test-taking

Carol Rauen
RN, BC, MS, PCN, CCRN, CEN

Adult CCRN/CCRN-E/CCRN-K
Certification Review Course:
Test Taking Tips

Tips for Test-taking
Blueprint/Test Plan

Caring & Ethical Practice 20%

Clinical Judgment 80%

Test-taking Strategies

- Studying for the exam
  - Books
    - AACN Core Curriculum
    - Current critical care nursing texts
    - Critical Care Nurse Certification Test Prep Column
    - Physiology, pathophysiology, and pharmacology texts
Test-taking Strategies

- Practice questions a MUST!!!
- AACN books and CDs
- AACN Self-assessment Exam (SAE)
- Critical Care Nurse column
- Publishers

Test-taking Strategies

- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Create a study plan
- Monitor time
- Evaluate responses (correct and incorrect)

Applying for the Exam
Taking the Exam
- Read each question carefully
- Read stem
- Identify what is being asked
- Consider the answer
- Read ALL distracters
- Select choice
- Reread stem
- Did you answer the question that was asked?

Taking the Exam (cont)
- Don’t read into the question
  - Avoid asking “what if?”
  - Avoid comparing clinical
  - If the answer you “want” is not there, reread the question
  - Select best answer from options

Taking the Exam (cont)
- Look for key words
  - All responses could be correct
  - What is the question asking?
  - Early, late, best, first
  - Time frame
  - Always or never
Taking the Exam (cont)

- Look for key words
  - Most or least likely
  - Nursing process
  - Prioritize
  - ABC’s always first

Taking the Exam (cont)

- Answer all questions
  - No penalty for guessing
  - Answer all questions first time through
  - Mark for return

Don’t let a question throw you off or break your confidence!!
Taking the Exam (cont)

- Changing answers
  - First choice is usually correct
  - Only change if you were unsure at first
  - Don't let distracters distract you
  - When in doubt, DON'T change it!!

Taking the Exam (cont)

- Eye on the time
  - Make a plan
  - Monitor progress
  - If short, consider skipping long questions
  - Continue to read carefully

Summary