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Schizophrenia-Auditory Hallucination Reflection

Auditory hallucinations are extremely distracting, anxiety provoking and cause inability to focus or perform minute everyday tasks. This experience revealed these exact symptoms within myself. The auditory hallucinations disabled me from properly utilizing memory recollection, reading and answering questions about an article, building a paper airplane, and even recollecting previously learned and understood material. Although I was able to recollect 3 out of 5 of both the number and word lists, answer all the questions from the article I was reading, and remember some of my previously known material, the hallucinations still hindered me from being able to perform these tasks to the best of my ability. It was distracting, slightly horrifying and truly portrayed a day-in-the-life of someone who experiences hallucinations. Not only that, but it also provoked a significant emotional response.

Emotionally, the hallucinations provoked scary thoughts that could be applied to any real-life experiences, enabling someone to almost think that they are real. To someone who doesn't battle with schizophrenia, auditory hallucinations are not often thought about. They illicit an anxious response and I can now better understand why the symptom of paranoia is easily exhibited in someone battling with schizophrenia. For me it created a sense of insecurity, vulnerability, and fear, not knowing what voices or sounds were to follow the last ones. It was overwhelming to attempt the aforementioned tasks while also listening to random words and negative thoughts. My anxiety level increased and so did my heartbeat, leaving me with an increased awareness of how somebody who experiences auditory hallucinations feels. This simulation provided me with a sense of empathy towards someone battling with schizophrenia or

more specifically someone who has auditory hallucinations. It did not change how I view people with schizophrenia. This is because my brother was once improperly diagnosed with schizophrenia.

My brother had a substance abuse problem two years ago and was withdrawing from alcohol. While he was withdrawing, he experienced auditory hallucinations and paranoid delusions. The facility he attended was not well-trained in alcohol withdrawal and was quick to diagnose him with schizophrenia, even after explaining that he was going through acute alcohol withdrawal. For this reason, I believe I am more empathetic towards people suffering with mental illnesses in general and the exercise did not change my opinion on how I view people with schizophrenia. It did; however, provide me with further validation of my feelings towards all people who experience mental illness. I feel that you never know how it feels to walk in someone else's shoes and because of that, treating everyone with kindness and without judgement is crucial, not only in the healthcare setting, but also in everyday life. Therefore, I would recommend this simulation to other students.

By continuing this simulation, it would present students with a virtual reality of what it truly feels like to live with auditory hallucinations. It creates a destigmatized environment, even if for only fifteen minutes, that enables us to empathize with, and comprehend what it's like to be someone who experiences auditory hallucinations. Hallucinations are experienced by half of all people who experience schizophrenia, therefore opening our eyes to what it's like to be a patient with schizophrenia as well. With that being said, it is pertinent that as a student nurse I implement my knowledge into practice when treating patients. I can do this by continuing to be non-judgmental, minding my facial expressions and always staying kind. This simulation will impact my career as a future nurse by enabling me to treat others with respect and an open mind.