

Journaling Assignment  
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I have met multiple people with some form of a psychiatric illness, such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Being in nursing school I most likely suffer from a mild case of an anxiety disorder. Although before starting nursing school, I was involved in a car crash, which left me with PTSD months after the wreck. I remember the thought of driving or someone bringing up any topic that involved me operating a vehicle would cause severe anxiety. At times I would perspire, feel like I could not catch my breath, and my heartrate shot through the roof. That feeling lasted for about three months, and during those times I stressed out even more - thinking that the feeling would never disappear. Before that accident I never thought about how one incident could distort how I would go about my day. I honestly underestimated the toll it took not only mentally, but physically - I cannot fathom what people with chronic PTSD go through.

Just like any new clinical setting, I am nervous about how the environment is, including the staff, patients, etc. Personally, I think TV shows have portrayed psychiatric facilities as this horrible place and there is a negative stigma on the people who are at those facilities seeking help. Social media and people have slowly started to openly talk about mental health and the reality of it. I would say my lack of knowledge of the reality of mental illness is my biggest fear. I personally do not come from a culture who openly talks about mental health. I honestly do not think I have talked much about it with my parents or family, but every culture is different in dealing with topics like mental illness. In addition, my other main concern is will I be able to effectively use therapeutic communication while speaking to patients with mental illnesses. I do not want to cause a trigger or anything to upset them emotionally. Communication in any setting is a major factor, I fear I might not be able to communicate effectively.

There is a significant demand for compassion and sensitivity, and there is a need for great communication skills that can help patients deal with challenging conditions. While communicating effectively, patients feel more empowered in situations where they may feel they have little control. Not only is it important to know the right thing to say, but also the right tone of voice, volume, and body language necessary to care for patients in a variety of situations. Therapeutic communication is part of many mental health nursing tasks, including the teaching of problem-solving techniques. It is important to maintain these skills in environments that can be unpredictable.

I expect to learn how to effectively treat and communicate with a variety of patients with mental illness. I want to be successful in my patient teaching, skills, and recognize the issues in this population and be able to implement therapeutic nursing interventions. In addition, I would like to learn more about how people with different illnesses of varying degrees cope. My three questions I would like to find answers during this course are: how effective are support groups, what age group is the most affected and why, lastly, what percentage of healthcare workers have a mental illness?