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<p>Step 1 Description</p> <p>I participated in an online AA message board. There were a lot of people online and participating. The message boards are open 24/7 for people to read through and participate in, which I think is great because of the current state of the country. I mainly just read through the posts and comments of the different message boards, but I spent so long reading people's thoughts and struggles with their addiction. I think I spent a total of three hours just reading through and commenting on people's posts and replies. This was my first experience with anything related to addiction or AA in a personal setting, so it was very interesting to be able to see and participate in.</p>	<p>Step 4 Analysis</p> <p>My previous knowledge about AA and other support groups was very limited. I only had our lectures on addiction and my work experience in a simulation lab with nursing and medical students to go off of. I do not know specific literature surrounding this situation but being able to experience it personally showed me how important AA is to so many people. We talk about support systems in our lectures and know that having support is so important for people in recovery and this provides them with that. This also gives me the perspective of this situation from a personal or patient centered level instead of thinking about it academically or as a healthcare professional. It has allowed me to sit and see how people struggling with addiction think and cope with their addictions and how they use group support systems like AA to keep them accountable and sober.</p>
<p>Step 2 Feelings</p> <p>At the beginning of this assignment I was both indifferent and nervous. I did not think I would get anything out of it because I did not think I would be able to relate to anything I saw but actually being able to participate in the AA boards was much different and more relatable than I thought it would be. It is hard to judge a situation from behind a screen but reading everybody's words about their struggles, relapses, problems, sobriety, and accomplishments gave me a sense of hope. One of the boards I participated in was posted by a man who started his recovery when he was 30 and he talked about thinking he was too young or not far enough gone to ask for help and it resonated deeply with me. While I don't personally use substances, I felt a sense of solidarity with a lot of the people there because I do have experience with unhealthy coping mechanisms for life and a lot of it gives the same end result.</p>	<p>Step 5 Conclusion</p> <p>I do not think there was any way to make this experience better or worse. If I could have done anything differently in hindsight I would have started this assignment sooner and gotten a better picture of how AA and other support groups work but I can still do this in the future outside of this assignment so it doesn't make much difference to me now. I have learned so much from this assignment. I did not realize how important AA was for so many people to maintaining their sobriety and connecting with other people in similar situations as them until I got to read through and see their interactions. They are supportive without judgement, bias, hatred, and prejudice which is something I think is rare to find in the world these days. AA is a diverse group of people: rich, poor, homeless, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, native, educated, limited education, and so much more, but they all have the same needs and support and love each other.</p>
<p>Step 3 Evaluation</p> <p>I think this assignment was a fantastic learning opportunity. There is a lot of stigma around mental illness and seeking help, so a lot of people do not actually know what goes on in things like AA meetings. My only experience with AA before this assignment was what they show on TV or in movies, but you cannot get an accurate picture of something until you see it in a real setting. I did not know what to expect at the beginning of the assignment but overall, it went well. This was exposure to something I had very limited knowledge of and now I can use this in the future both for additional learning and in my professional practice.</p>	<p>Step 6 Action Plan</p> <p>This assignment has helped me tremendously and given me a good foundation to be able to use in my future nursing practice. This was an important learning experience that I think has given me valuable knowledge to be able to pass on to my patients. It is always difficult to refer somebody to treatment when you don't know exactly what it entails but knowing a little bit more about how AA works and the kinds of things that go on in meetings gives me the information to pass onto my patients. People trust you more when you are knowledgeable about whatever you are talking about and I will be able to apply this to my practice in the future. I can also use my experience with AA to recommend other support groups for patients. I did not know that other support groups existed, but this assignment also brought several to my attention that I can further research and keep up to date information on.</p>