

Introspective Journal Entry

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My experience with psychiatric illnesses began when I was completing my clinicals at the hospital in the ER and with the fire department while completing my EMT course. I had a patient who had schizophrenia and a patient who had dissociative identity disorder or multiple personality disorder. My experience with my schizophrenic patient was not a positive one because they believed that I was someone else who was trying to hurt them. The patient managed to somehow get a pen and proceeded to try and stab me or “defend themselves from their attacker” with the pen while I went in to the room to check their IV levels for the nurse. My multiple personality disorder patient’s case was quite gruesome. We had a call to a residential house, we walk in and the walls are covered in splattered blood, there is a long black haired wig on the table, a purple dress that is ripped on the coffee table and the patient is sitting on the floor with his knees to his chest in only his underwear. We assessed the patient to see if he had any wounds in order to determine the source of the blood on the walls but he did not have any. When we questioned him on if anyone lived there with him or if he knows what happened the night before the patient responded in a deep male voice, “I told her to behave and she didn’t listen to me” and then switched to a higher pitched voice and said “that’s too bad because we had a fun night planned”. I never found out what happened but I did later find out that he was diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. Both of these situations were quite traumatizing and quite frankly, turned me away from psychiatric nursing or patients.

I have always been interested in psychology, how the mind works and true crime documentaries or podcasts but the actual patient experiences I have had has diminished my interest in psychiatric nursing. I know that not all psychiatric patients will be as extreme of situations as those but I would have to say that is one of my main concerns for this module. I am also concerned that my previous experiences may hinder my openness to the psychiatric field of

nursing and I may miss out on some valuable experiences during clinicals. However, I hope to learn to be more open and understanding of psychiatric patients during this module and get over my fear of interacting with them. I think my expectation of clinicals will be different than my EMT course in the sense that there may be a stronger sense of supervision while and if we interact with patients and that we will be learning more about the care plans of patients rather than interacting directly with the patients.

There are so many questions that I have in regards to psychology and the psychiatric patient but I think the top three that I hope to answer for myself during this clinical would be 1) Is there any possible way to prevent schizophrenia? 2) Are individuals with dissociative identity disorder aware of what their other personalities do? 3) Does addiction or substance abuse disorder have a genetic link? I think that the first two questions I want to answer are because of my personal experience and my third question is because I have had friends and family members go through addiction and I have always been curious about diving deeper into the cause or influences of it. I think this curiosity goes hand in hand with my fascination of true crime documentaries, shows or podcasts. There is a show called *Mind Hunter* on Netflix and it is based on how the FBI started classifying serial killers in the late 1970s and how they think through the “why” of the serial killer’s actions is what intrigues me. They do this by breaking down previous traumas or influences that could have led to a possible psychiatric disorder the serial killer may have in order to have a better understanding. I think my main goal for this module is to gain a better understanding of psychiatric patients and psychiatric disorders and not be in fear of an interaction with them anymore.