

Mental Illness Journal Entry:

The Known and Unknown

Jenna Dixon

Module 6, Covenant School of Nursing

Mental Illness Journal: The Known and Unknown

Mental illness is a disease that affects so many, yet it often gets pushed under the rug. I don't have much experience with mental illnesses, other than what I've seen on movies or TV shows. It does not get talked about in schools. While mental illness is a legitimate problem for many, it is difficult to put yourself in someone's shoes when you do not understand what exactly is going on in their brain. I know a couple of people who struggle with anxiety, to a point where it affects their activities of daily living. In high school one of my friends struggled with depression; she said it was hard for her to even get out of bed some days, at church I know several of the older members who were diagnosed with dementia, they could be really sweet at times and others really mean. I know that anxiety and depression is very common and that some of the happiest people can be struggling with depression.

My senior year of high school I took an EMT class. In this class I had to get 48 job shadowing hours. I shadowed two 12 hour shifts with EMTs, and two 12 hour shifts with ER nurses. This class is the reason I wanted to become a nurse. While I was doing a 12-hour shift at the ER, a patient came in who had tried to commit suicide. This patient was assessed and then sent to the psychiatric hospital for further help. While I was doing the EMT 12-hour shift, there was a call from a person that needed help with a family member who had taken too many pills, filled the bathtub up with rubbing alcohol and was going to use a lighter to light it on fire. In both of those situations, the professionals that I was shadowing did all that they could do in their scope of practice to help these people, but ultimately had to send them to the mental clinic where they could receive more help.

Due to the lack of experience I have with mental illness, I have mixed emotions about going to the Plaza. The media portrays mental illnesses as scary, out of control people. I am

excited, and nervous. I have pictured in my head the classic movie hospital with white walls, white ceilings, white floors, white everything. I enjoy socializing with patients and am excited to get to talk to them but I'm also nervous that I will not know what to say or how to respond in some situations that could happen at the Plaza. I know that having the tour before clinical will relieve a lot of my nerves.

I have loved learning about all of the different specialties in nursing up to this point and am now excited to learn more about the psychiatric mental health side. I expect to learn about the different disorders in detail and know more of what is happening in the minds of each patient. I want to know how they feel. As I was going through the schizophrenia voiceover, I watched the YouTube video about hearing voices. It was interesting to me because it showed a tiny glimpse of what happens in their minds. When I turned the video off, I had chills realizing that they can't simply turn off the voices. Do people with mental disorders know that there is a problem or do they think that everything is normal, because they've heard voices all the time? Do patients with schizophrenia, who hear voices, still hear their conscious? Can mental illness be prevented? I also want to learn about multiple personality disorders and what goes on in the brain with someone who has that diagnosis.

It is interesting to learn that at some point everybody's mental health declines in response to stressors. Whether it is overwhelming schoolwork, experiencing family problems, or even road rage. I am excited to study the psychiatric disorders in this module, because they are more common than people realize. It is hard to put myself in someone's shoes when I do not struggle with the same issues. I know that there is not a cure for most of these disorders but I am thankful that medications have been found to improve the quality of life for patients who live with

psychiatric disorders. I am thankful for healthcare workers giving these patients the best care, and I can't wait to further my education studying about psychiatric nursing.