

# -Journaling Assignment-

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*“Rich people may think they are wise, but a poor person with discernment.  
can see right through them.” (Proverbs 28:11)*

My feelings regarding psychiatric nursing are somewhat indifferent, in that I do not find the idea of caring for people who are mentally ill to be problematic. I know many people we interact with in our daily lives struggle with mental issues. The act of living, growing, developing, and evolving sends us all down unknown paths and unfamiliar territories. Navigating life continually challenges us mentally and physically. All of us struggle at times. To treat a patient that is struggling with mental illness is much easier if you can just see the human inside who wants to be loved and valued- just as we all do. Empathy is a good thing.

Psychiatric illness has been an issue in my family. While I never met or knew him, my biological father suffered from Alcoholism and mental illness. Until the day my mother died, she had a difficult time speaking of it, so the information I do have is limited.

My mom and father were high school sweethearts, my mom was the homecoming queen of Agua Fria Highschool in Litchfield Park, Arizona. Jack was the star football player and ¼ Indian. They married directly after high school and had my brother, Shawn- Holly- 3 years later, and I was born 2 years after that. Initially, the issue was alcohol. When Jack drank, he was mean, and this grew out of control. My grandma said that my mom would often have bruises on her face and arms, but she was scared to leave. My poppy, mom's father, got into several fist fights with Jack. Of course, that only made it worse for mom.

My father's abuse of my mother eventually manifested into homicidal tendencies. He attempted to kill her twice, that I am aware of. Once he tried to run over her with a car. The other time he used a knife and chased her up into the tree in our front yard. I was 2 years old. Mom said that he took me into the house with the knife and would not let anyone in. She said it was because he was not threatened by me. She said he was laughing, and she was crying. (What a creep!) Mom

said that Jack never harmed Holly or me because we were little; (she was 5 -and I was 2) He did hurt Shawn though, my big brother. One incident I know of is when Shawn was around 7 or 8 years old. He would try to protect his mom. Jack picked him up by the head and threw his head through a wall- leaving a large hole in the sheetrock.

Soon thereafter, Jack had a horrific car accident. His car flipped head over heel 6 to 8 times. He spent 9 weeks in Barrow Neurological Institute, 6 of that in a coma. He was diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia and was extremely dangerous both homicidal and suicidal tendencies. Jack's sister signed for him and he was released into her care.

My mom was advised by Jack's physicians and by the local authorities that it was in her best interest to leave town to a place that was discreet. So, she did. Mom was 28 years old; it was 1974, she had a Volkswagen 3 kids and \$100.00 her dad gave to her. She could only think of one place to go that she knew anyone. Her old neighbors had moved to Lubbock, Texas a year prior to attend Texas Tech University. She got a job as a waitress at night and became an Avon lady in the day. She eventually dropped the night job and kept her day job. Mom sold Avon for 36 years. She raised all three of us kids doing it.

That is quite a story, I have never written it down or uncovered that much of it before. I received some information from say my aunt who still lives in AZ, the other my older sister, Holly, knew. She did not want to talk about it. But honestly, I think it has been good for me to speak about. In our case- Mental illness impacted so many lives- and continues too today; both positively and negatively. Positively because it enabled my mother to persevere and fight hard. She won even after all the obstacles in front of her. Mom is an inspiration today for all of us and everyone who knew her. The negative impact for us is that it leaves us with a lot of why's and what ifs. My

sister and I are unlucky in love and choosing men. I know that comes from not having a male role model to look up to. Also, not knowing the love of a father is a big loss.

Today, my brother is also doing well. He has a happy and long marriage with two great sons. It has been a struggle for him- and for all of us. We were close though- we had each other, and we had a happy childhood; with a lot of Avon. All three of us are fully functional today.