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Personal experiences with psychiatric illnesses

Current Theories and Practice: Journaling assignment

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Growing up the daughter of a social worker and mental health counselor I can always remember the stories my mom would come home and talk to me about. Not only was I exposed to some mental health issues that a large portion of society deal with today, but I too can recall the interest she had about the health of the human mind. I look back today and realize because of her interest, she led a spark that has allowed me to become more intrigued in psychiatric mental health as well. Throughout my life I have encountered so many people that have dealt with some of these issues and I have not known it at times. I expect to learn a lot this module and connect the puzzle pieces of why people experience the things they do only to use this better understanding in my nursing career. Needless to say, lifetime movies, murder documentaries, and my mom's story telling have greatly attributed to this interest.

As a young child I remember my aunt being placed in the hospital, knowing I wanted to become a nurse and being interested in the nursing profession I began to ask questions. My initial question was, "Why is she going there?" and "What happened to her?". More importantly why was my mom and uncle gathering so many of her things and assisting her with dropping all of these items off to a hospital three hours away from our hometown. Later I found out that she went to the hospital she was staying at by her own free will, little did I know she suffers from bipolar disorder. She had went to this facility due to a breakdown she was experiencing, I was shocked because I didn't realize that there was a mental facility in that close of proximity to our hometown. This is where it all began, and the interest began to spike more than it ever had.

My life went on and I continued to observe those around me after I had processed what my aunt was going through and gotten a description of what was happening to her from my mom. At thanksgiving one year I was "people watching" those in my family just as I do those in target and Walmart. I always knew my grandpa's sister drank an excessive amount of alcohol

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but it never really took my interest until after I was able to grasp a little better comprehension of why people may do some of the things they do. As I'm sitting at the thanksgiving table, my mind is constantly working, trying to figure out what has drove her to this habit she isn't willing to give up. I kept pondering and trying to put myself in every scenario I could think of to best understand what was so magical about alcohol to fix all of my problems. That day I learned something new. Some patients are willing to resolve their issues and want to get better, then you have some who aren't going to pursue something greater. She has tried to attend rehab but has relapsed every time, and if she couldn't have alcohol in rehab she would just down her mouth wash instead. You can guarantee every Thanksgiving and occasionally Christmas I sit and continue to ponder why. That is one of my expectations this module. I want to find an answer for why alcoholics are led to this behavior and what motives are they seeking out by engaging in this.

One of the days I won't ever forget, my family and I had all met at a local Japanese restaurant to eat supper before one of my best friends departed to basic training. My mom as well as the rest of the immediate family I have were there and we were waiting on my PaPa. Ten minutes go by and he starts stumbling in the door, being eighteen at the time I knew exactly what was happening. My Granna (his wife) demanded that he get in the vehicle so they could go home, to which she called my mom and cried in embarrassment later that night. I had never seen anything like this from him before and it caused a strain on our relationship for three weeks. I refused to talk to him or would use that as a trip to guilt knowing that he knew better then to act like that. I discovered something that they had been keeping from me my whole eighteen years of life, he too was an alcoholic and chose to go to rehab long before I ever was old enough to understand! Who would have thought that my very best friend growing up and to this day

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suffered from this as well. I still have arousing questions such as “why?” and what was his rehab experience like for him. The episode that day has not stopped him from drinking beer, although it was a checking point for him and for my family. I won’t ever forget throwing out all of his bud light the day after!

Of course there are a few other issues that some in my family and friend’s struggle with but the most intriguing one to me is alcoholism. Another question I would love to be answered is what factors contribute to developing this illness. My boyfriend’s dad suffers from this just about as bad as my PaPa’s sister does. He drinks from the time he gets up every morning to go check water to the time he goes to bed every evening. As I began to talk to my boyfriend about it and allowed him to voice his concerns he told me, “I don’t understand what is so good about alcohol, and I don’t understand why that goes before his family.”. Not only does he not understand but I don’t think that some realize the effect this illness has on their health mentally and physically but the health of those around them. As the holiday’s began to roll around I started to observe his behavior (it’s my most favorite thing to do when it comes to people). At Thanksgiving he didn’t attend because he found an excuse to stay home and get drunk and at Christmas he arrived so intoxicated that he was running into the walls and pictures in the house. Not too long ago he was having an extreme episode of being far beyond his normal alcohol level, so I was able to just ask my boyfriend’s sister about how much it took for him to become like that. To this question which she responded it normally takes him a thirty pack to get drunk if not more. We engaged in further conversation about his behavior and his illness to which it broke my heart for them. Growing up I never experienced my family not being actively involved in everything I did, so I tried my best to wrap my mind around what things would have been like at school and at home for their family.

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I expect to learn not only about alcoholism but about the various other mental health issues that many suffer from today. Clinical as well as the course of this module has excited me in knowing I will hopefully gather the answers I have and take away interventions to manage one's mental health in the best way possible. I am striving to gather a better understanding to help me within my nursing practice and my everyday life. Within saying this I think I would love to become a psychiatric nurse in the future. I have a passion for observing but for also trying to find ways to manage and help those who suffer from the things they do, as well as trying to help their families cope with these issues.