

PSYCH THROUGH MY EYES

Psych Through My Eyes

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In today's society mental health patients are usually broadcasted to the world with such a negative connotation. Many psychiatric patients are displayed by social media, Netflix series and even movies as being outrageously incompetent when it comes to controlling their emotions. The way these patients are portrayed gives me a sense of fear, and I know that me having a bias in this profession could affect the way I care for my patients. I am truly interested in the minds of these patients and how their reality looks to them versus what I see.

As we progress through this module, I am excited to learn in lecture how these patients function and what they are constantly having to deal with. As a future nurse I know I will encounter patients who may suffer from a mental illness, whether it be something such as mild anxiety or all the way to treating a patient who is schizophrenic or any other severe psychiatric disorder. I hope to learn how to communicate and be able to adapt to the everchanging events that can occur while treating a psychiatric patient.

I have experienced and encountered mental illness within myself and also a close family member. With this family member they have a history of drug abuse from a very young age and they now at 23 years old, still struggle with it. I am extremely close to this family member and it is hard for me to sometimes show them that unconditional love, due to their addiction and the way their behavior can change frequently. Now this person has overcome their addiction and can effectively self-recognize their destructive behavior and can cope with their urges to use again, and fight them.

For me personally, although I have never been medically diagnosed, I believe I have some sort of anxiety and in 2018 I acutely suffered from postpartum depression. My anxiety has kept me from making new friends, asking for help in a store and even not asking questions in class. In February of this year, I started some weight loss medication, but because I was on this medication for longer than the recommended time, I began to notice that the effect was not the same as before. I started to notice there was a change in my mentality to the point to where I felt like I was bipolar or severely depressed.

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I talked to my husband about the way I was feeling and the only way I could explain how I felt, was that I felt “numb.” I actually believed that I couldn’t sympathize with him or even my son. There was a specific time where I really knew something was wrong and it was when my son was frustrated and crying and I looked at him and felt nothing. Soon I talked to my doctor about my concerns and he advised me to stop the medication and that my mental status should return to its pre-medication state. I have since been off this medication for the last month and I finally feel like myself again.

Before experiencing this mental state I had the perception that most people probably have when it comes to mental illnesses, and that was that “they just needed to get over it.” I now know that whether the current mental health is caused by medication or manifested in a different way, the patient cannot help it. I understand now that you may not even realize that there is a problem until it is “too late.” It definitely took me a few weeks before I came to the realization of the severity of my problem. I hope that this short, but life changing state of mind will help me understand what my patient is going through and how I can be there for them. I can look at the patient and understand how they may be feeling and how frightened they must feel, being all alone. What helped me the most was that my husband was there for me through it all and allowed for me to take all the time I needed to heal and rest my mind.

I am very eager to interact with the psychiatric patients, but I am nervous because I have never been around people who are severely mentally ill. I do not think I could be a psych nurse due to the fact that I would not be able to mentally handle seeing or even dealing with a suicidal or homicidal patient daily. I am a firm believer that in order to treat these patients you have to be able to be desensitized to how they may react or even their past, and to provide these patients with the care they deserve, a nurse needs to have that strong mindset.

Three questions I would ask myself would be, “How are you going to handle seeing these patients who are suicidal or have debilitating illnesses?” “How does it feel like to have a severe

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psychiatric disorder?” and “What makes a person become this way, or what events took place that lead them here?”