

Introspective Journal Assignment

Nikaele McCoy

Covenant School of Nursing

Before the increased media spotlight and dialogue surrounding mental health, it has never been a concern or topic of interest that I focused on in the past. There isn't anyone that I know that has a diagnosed mental health disorder, though the more I am learning of these disorders the more I believe there are people close to me that may have underlining aspects that could suggest otherwise. I am open to learning what I can regarding psychiatric and mental health care this module as it is becoming an evolving presence within the medical field, and I would like to have the tools and the knowledge to best care for my patient should they have a mental disorder. My current concern is that I am not qualified or trained to interact with this population and scared that I may say or do something wrong to upset the patient or place myself in an unideal situation unknowingly. I believe this population deserves the same amount of dignified and appropriate care as any other population and believe they should feel as if their fears and concerns are being heard and cared for. I am excited to have the opportunity of clinical experience especially during the current pandemic as I am sure past students may have not been able to have the same type of clinical experience. I plan to keep my mind open and take in this information and apply it for the remainder of my clinical experiences and well into my nursing career regardless of where I work.

I do not have personal experiences with mental health which I believe is why I used to have the perceptions I had regarding mental health disorders, though my thoughts have shifted dramatically since starting nursing school. Previously, it would be difficult for me to understand why someone with a mental disorder would act and conduct themselves a certain way and why it seems difficult for certain individuals to receive help for it. I would once look at a situation and think to myself "If they are unhappy with their lives or a situation than why don't they just fix it"? Looking back on those past thoughts, I can look at a situation from a different set of lenses and think about any barriers this person may face when trying to seek out help or how there are

physiological characteristics at play so simply turning off or changing the undesirable behavior isn't as easy as it would seem to be. Now that my perception has shifted, I would like to continue my growth and learn how to care for this population as a nurse and ways I could improve their quality of care and recognize when interventions are necessary. Though I do not plan to work within a mental health or psychiatric facility after graduation, it resonated with me hearing how I could still have a mental health patient in any area of nursing and not ceasing the opportunity to learn ways to care for them would be me doing a disservice towards my own nursing care success.

A big concern I have would be to cause more harm during my clinical experience than being helpful when interacting with a patient. I would not want to make a patient upset for any reason, though that could be hard when I am asked for something they know they cannot have or know they cannot do. Growing up I have avoided confrontation and conflict in many situations and would rather walk away or mentally shut withdrawal as a response. I tend to feel myself get anxious and uncomfortable whenever I am placed in a situation which requires me to confront or interact with an individual who is upset or mad about something. I also have a fear of not being able to deescalate a situation for those same reasons of feeling anxious and uncomfortable as I see someone visibly becoming upset or angry. I would not want to say something or deny a request and upset a patient and then not be able to calm them back down or direct their attention to a different topic. A barrier I see myself having to overcome during module is providing compassionate care without being a pushover out of fear of upsetting the patient.

My expectations for this module would be complete the course feeling more comfortable interacting and providing care to the psychiatric and mental health community. I know I will not be an expert or know everything there is to know prior to leaving this module, but my hope is to

gain more knowledge of the different types of disorders and how to apply nursing care with that disorder in mind. A few questions I would like to have answered during this module would be, “What are the key concepts that are vital for me to be knowledgeable of with a particular disorder”, “How can I suspect a patient’s demeanor is escalating when observing a situation and what can I do to deescalate it”, “ What are some helpful tips to remember the more common behavioral medications and their adverse effects”. These questions are the key points I would like to feel more comfortable with regarding my mental health knowledge and hope to have these questions answered by the end of this module.

Overall, I am excited to learn what I can about psychiatric and mental health nursing and am open to the clinical experiences that are being offered to us. I am looking forward to seeing another aspect of nursing and cannot wait to work with this population of patients!