

Psychiatric Mental Health Journal Reflection

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Personally, I have very little experience learning about and discussing psychiatric mental health. I would say my experience is limited to a short 2 months of counseling in my first semester of college, reading about it online, hearing about it in other's testimonies, and discussing eating disorders and depression during Instructional Module 5. The little experience I have with it is not because of a lack of desire to know more about it. I find the mind interesting and have been excited for this module since early on in nursing school. I hope to be able to learn more of the science behind psychiatric mental health disorder so that I can more adequately care for my patients in the future. Whether I am in a Psychiatric Mental Healthcare setting or not, I am aware that mental health disorders are everywhere and are very prevalent in our world today.

As mentioned previously, during my first semester of college I went to counseling for a couple of months. I was far from home, experiencing bullying and harassment from my roommate, anxious, and was having trouble with feeling like I was failing myself and everyone around me. It was a hard time in my life to say the least, but I have never grown as much as I did during that season. I feel like my counselor taught me how to evaluate my emotions and determine how the events in my life made me feel through activities and "homework." Through this, I was able to put meaning behind my emotions and therefore I felt like I had a sense of control over how I was feeling at any given moment. However, ultimately my Wonderful Counselor, Jesus Christ, made the biggest difference in my life at that time. I would say that in general, I am an anxious person, but it is mostly controlled at this point through prayer and being conscious of my thoughts. The other experiences I have with psychiatric illness include watching my dad and younger sister struggle throughout my life and theirs.

When I was in middle school my dad had a “mental breakdown.” In my eyes it seemed as if one night he was my normal dad and the next morning I woke up and my mom told me that they had been in the ER all night and my dad wouldn’t be staying at our house for a while because it wasn’t safe for me and my sisters. Now, years later, I know that my dad was severely sleep deprived due to his job, was drinking too much, and struggling with anxiety and depression. The way my mom put it when she was telling me everything that happened that night was that “[my] dad was not [my] dad.” Meaning he was not acting like the man we knew. My family struggled for about a year while my dad got help through counseling and medication. I also mentioned my little sister. I have two younger sisters who were brought into my family as foster kids and then later adopted. The older of the two came to us when she was around 24 months old. As she has gotten older, we have seen her struggle with addictions and depression.

I would say that my only fears or concerns would be that I might struggle to keep my composure if I was ever in a situation that hit too close to home. However, I also think that because of what I have gone through in my personal experience and my family’s experience, I will be able to better relate to my patients and show a different kind of compassion.

During this module, I expect to learn how to treat a person struggling with mental illness with sensitivity and compassion. I hope to learn how to effectively communicate with each patient, because every patient is different and has different needs when it comes to care and communication. Three questions that I would like to find answers to in this module are: “To what extent does trauma during the first 2 years of life affect a person’s mental health later on?”, “Which psychiatric mental health disorders are most commonly genetic?”, “How do you treat a struggling patient without adding to their trauma and distress while they are in a facility that can be traumatic or distressing?”.