

Current Theories Reflective Journal Assignment

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Concepts

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Before starting Instructional Module 6, I have experienced psychiatric mental health patients on the unit that I currently work on which is, Cardiac Intensive Care Unit at Covenant Medical Center. Suicidal ideation or alcohol withdrawal are the most common that we see. It can be a burden depending on the patient whether they need to have a sitter and if the unit is already short staffed, it adds to the stress. For myself, I have a fear of the patient becoming violent. I was working as a Unit Secretary when we had a nurse that was attacked by her patient who had psychiatric mental health disorders. I do believe my fear comes more from not fully understanding the disorders and their characteristics. I was not ecstatic about having clinical experiences in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, but as we have discussed in lecture, it is everywhere, and the population has significantly grown over the past couple of years. I plan to learn as much as I can for the safety of my patient and others.

My personal experience with psychiatric illnesses is with my father. He was an alcoholic and would physically abuse my mother and siblings. Thankfully for myself, I do not have a lot of memories from that time. I believe that I would usually run and hide whenever things at home would get too scary or loud to me. I was very young when he was at his worst. I was the baby of the family, and that may be the only reason I didn't experience as much physical abuse, but I did receive equal amount of yelling. I am very grateful that my siblings never held any resentment towards me since they received the worst of the abuse. I do have a small memory of sitting through a court mandated AA meeting with him after he received a DWI, or perhaps multiple. He even had the breathalyzer that was attached to his vehicle before it would start. He is now 21 years sober but doesn't like to discuss his past whenever I try to ask questions. I believe my mother has some hoarding characteristics, but that is something I've found to be common in the

Hispanic population. Especially if they have immigrated from their home countries to the United States. They want to have something, or everything, to show for their hard work in this country.

My fear is that I will not be able to stand my ground if a patient begins to yell or get in my face. As I gain more nursing experience, I know that I will eventually develop that thick skin. As of today, I tend to shut down when that happens to me, and I believe I have a harder time with it because of my childhood up with my father's psychiatric illnesses. Even when he was sober, he was a dictator father and husband. I have gotten better because it used to lead to shutting down and with me in tears. I can at least hold back the tears now, but I can feel my heart rate pounding in my chest if I feel like someone is trying to become confrontational with me. My body wants to naturally go into "flight" mode. Listening to parents who were alcoholics that have caused harm to their spouse or children will probably elicit an emotional response, but just something that I will need to step away for a moment or wait to cry about in my car at the end of the day.

My expectations are that I will gain more confidence after our clinical experiences and that I can continue to see past the illness and see the patient. We live in a time that judge's people with mental illnesses and don't look at the problems or obstacles in life that lead them to this point. My father caused many hardships for my family, but he is still my family who is constantly trying to do better. I hope to learn more regarding alcoholism specifically only because of my personal experience with it, but also the common mental illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Questions that I would like answers for are: 1. Does alcoholism have a genetic link? 2. If you don't know exactly what the mental illness is, how can you help your patient? 3. What are nonpharmacological interventions, besides therapy, that are available for patients?