

Current Theories and Practice: Journaling Assignment

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Nursing 1206: Childbearing Family and Acute Psychiatric Nursing Concepts

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I am excited about this course. The last twelve years of my life have been in careers that have involved people with mental health disorders or intellectual developmental disabilities. Like you said, even if we are not employed in a mental health profession, we will be exposed to it on a daily basis because of our line of work.

What I am not familiar with are the nursing interventions that go along with mental health. I have dealt with mental health through communication, but not with any other interventions that a nurse would use. It will be interesting to see how chemical restraints are used and what types of policies must be followed before that decision is made.

My direct experience with psychiatric illness was when I was a direct support professional in a group home for Star Care Specialty. I worked with six women that ranged in age from twenty-two years of age to sixty-one years of age. In the home we had one client with down syndrome, one on the autism spectrum, two schizophrenic, and one I guess just had a low enough IQ to qualify for services. I learned a lot working with this population that I would not have known otherwise. The saddest part of the job was that sometimes I felt like the women were in a prison. They had very little autonomy, hardly any money to spend on whatever they wanted (\$10 a week to be exact) and were at the mercy of whoever was working that day. These women live a very structured life without any say in their care. They had to follow behavior plans that were written by individuals, who maybe spent ten minutes with them, and then the behavior plans were usually not implemented because the direct support staff was too lazy to complete it with the client. The employees were instructed that the women have choices, but most staff would refuse to allow them their choice. Even with all that being said, I really did enjoy my time there and made some lifelong memories.

My other experience with mental health was while I was a Public Safety Dispatcher for the City of Lubbock. I took calls from all different types of people. I started there when I was twenty-two years of age and left there when I was thirty-one. What I realized after all those years is that I was better at communicating with people the older and more experienced I was. When I first started in the field, I thought that I could make everyone I talked to cooperate with me and answer all my questions. Well, when people are in a crisis or have a mental disorder that is not always the case. My most embarrassing moment was when I was training someone, and we took a call from a woman calling from the pay phone at the Stripes on Ave P and 19th St. She was talking so fast, not making any sense, and would not answer any of our questions. I was unfamiliar with her condition, so I would yell at her to try and get the information I needed, well that didn't work. She kept talking, not realizing that me and my trainee had no idea what was going on. I'm not sure what was going on with her, but over the years I developed a sense of patience that not a lot of people have, even after all their years of experience, to deal with mental illnesses. I have been told that I'm too nice, a pushover, let people do whatever they want, but really, I feel like I'm just treating them the way I would want to be treated.

I don't really have any huge fears or concerns since I have worked around that population. I guess my biggest fear would be around men, because I have only worked around them in a day rehabilitation setting and most were on the intellectual developmental disability spectrum, not really any drugs. When I went to Sunrise Canyon it was on the outpatient clinic side, so I have not been to the inpatient side. If the inpatient side is like the State School, then I am nervous, because I have heard some stories about that place.

My expectations for this module is to be more familiar with the narcotic, addiction, and psychiatric side of mental health. I would like to be more familiar with the programs that are

offered for addicts and people that are unstable looking for help with their mental illness. The three questions that I would like to find answers to during this module are where I can refer patients to that are suffering from addiction, undiagnosed mental health disorders, and what they need to do to qualify for the help they need.