Current Theories and Practice: Journaling Assignment

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Module 6: Current Theories

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When someone mentions mental health, I am always very intrigued on learning and understanding more. In this assignment I will discuss my individual experiences with mental health, my fears and concerns, and questions I want to answer during this module. Beginning this module, I am interested in learning as much as I can about mental health and nursing. I know it is going to be challenging because the mind is a very complex thing to learn. No two people think exactly alike and that makes this field of nursing and health so hard to master and learn. I am eager to learn this topic in our field and to see firsthand the facilities Lubbock, Tx has for these patients and the career path as a nurse.

I personally do not have very much experience with psychiatric illnesses. The only thing I have suffered from and seen in my family is anxiety. I never had noticed it before, but since beginning nursing school I have suffered greatly from anxiety. The anxiety that comes before big tests is incredibly stressful sometimes. I have never noticed this in myself until I began module one in April of 2021. The only other experience I have is my father is also a very anxious person. He wants to be the perfect dad and perfect husband and that destroys him when he's not. Anxiety may not even be considered a psychiatric illness, but that is how I kind of view it. The only other illness I suffered very little from is post-partum depression. I was never officially diagnosed, but I believe I was on the borderline of this illness. Having your first child is very hard and then not knowing what you're doing and feeling bad about everything you don't do perfectly; it affects a mother's mental health. I was also trying to breast feed and failed miserably and when you are always being told how much better breastmilk is for a child you feel like a failure when you are not able to do it. It was not long after that I was able to work through my depression. No medications were needed just some love from my husband, family, and patience for myself. Another brief experience I had with psychiatric illnesses, was when I was a unit secretary in the

Emergency Room at University Medical Center. My desk use to be right in front of room nine and ten. These, at that time, were the psychiatric patient rooms. These rooms could lock from the outside if a nurse needed to hold a patient without restraints. I remember always hearing horror stories of nurses getting hurt or patients sneaking into the air vents. I have never personally seen any of that. I remember the patients on withdrawal or high from drugs and suicidal. Very brief experiences with psychiatric illnesses, but enough to have me very interested in this specific field of nursing.

Psychiatric health is a very complex and initially scary field in nursing. It is a very unexpected challenge. You never know exactly what you are going to get behind every patient door. One big fear that comes to mind, is not knowing how to speak to these patients and making a problem worse. Depending on what a patient is going through, words can make such a difference. I am scared I am going to be that nursing student that says the wrong thing to a patient or accidentally looks at them wrong and it triggers a response. My next concern is having a patient that is violent towards themselves or others. I do not know if I would know how to manage that situation. You hear in movies and even people who have been in the program have interesting experiences with psychiatric patients. I know an earlier student that said she looked at an older patient wrong and she began chasing her down the hallway stripping clothes off. I do not feel confident that I would be able to control that kind of situation. Also, back to the emergency room at UMC, hearing those stories of nurses getting assaulted by psychiatric patients makes me a little nervous about this clinical experience.

I hope to learn so much from this module. I want to learn about the several types of mental illnesses and how to detect them. I have children and I want to be able to recognize when they need help before its too late. I want to see into this field of nursing in real life. The movies

portray psychiatric facilities, but I want to see what it is really like. I want to see how, as a nurse, we are able to entertain and also help treat these patients. I also want to have a better understanding of how to interact and talk to these patients. I do not want to be that nursing school student that says the wrong thing to one of these patients during my clinical rotations.

Thinking of questions for this reflection is a little difficult because of the very minimal experience that I've had with psychiatric health. One question that comes to mind is how do you talk to a psychiatric patient and control a situation? I do not want to say the wrong thing that escalates the situation or makes the patient upset. The next question I could think of is especially as a nursing student how do you be kind and generous to these patients without being manipulated? I know these patients can sometimes be restricted from items and I know as a new face and a nursing student, these patients might try their luck and manipulate us to get something or do something for them. My final question I can think of is who do we talk to when a patient voices an idea of self-harm or when we feel uneasy about a situation with a patient? I want to make sure I know the chain of command or who needs to be notified when a patient voices something to us or I overhear patients talking about something bad. I am excited for this module and eager to learn about psychiatric health and get firsthand clinical experience.