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Psychiatric Journaling Assignment

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Psychiatric mental health nursing is a specialty I have been somewhat exposed to. I believe that nurses who specialize in psychiatric nursing are very underrated. I think they should get more credit and recognition for the impact they have on their patient's lives. With mental health issues growing rapidly each year, these nurses are critical for their patient's wellbeing. Although I have only been exposed to the common mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, and substance abuse, I have seen the difference health care workers have on these types of patients. Since I have only been around a few mental health disorders, I am somewhat concerned about what I might experience during this instructional module. I am worried that I may say the wrong thing and upset a patient. Everyone has different triggers, so I will just have to be careful and not overstep any boundaries. However, I am very interested in psychiatric nursing so I think I will learn a lot during this module.

I have not had to deal with any major psychiatric illnesses in my life, nor have I had any family members who have dealt with them either. However, anxiety and depression seem to run in my family. About two years ago, I had to start anxiety and depression medication. I had experienced a situation that I wasn't able to work through on my own, so I sought out help. I have always been a very anxious person, but the situation I was in was causing my anxiety to flare up and would lead to panic attacks. This eventually led to me becoming depressed for weeks at a time. I was not wanting to get out of bed or no longer enjoyed the activities I used to. I was sleeping all day to avoid my emotions and it seemed to make the time go by faster. My mother has dealt with anxiety and depression her entire life, so she recommended that I go see her doctor. At first it was very hard to talk about how I was feeling and what was causing me to feel this way, but the staff there was amazing and helped me talk through everything. It took a few months to find a medication that worked for me. I've tried Buspirone, Cymbalta, and Prozac.

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Cymbalta caused me to become very sick. I started feeling even worse than I had and began to lose hope. I was seeing my doctor almost every week for checkups and at this point he almost was like a therapist to me. He is the reason I was able to get through the rough stages and I wouldn't be where I am if I hadn't had his help. I have been on Lexapro and Clonazepam for almost a year now and I finally feel back to normal. I currently see him about every 1-3 months to checkup. The experience I had with the nurses at this clinic is a huge reason why I appreciate nurses who work with mental health patients.

I have learned to recognize what triggers my anxiety and learned techniques to help cope with it. I usually try to avoid large crowds or being alone in a store or public area. I am almost never at home alone which has helped enormously with me feeling safe. My fears usually pop into my head when I am alone and become paranoid. When this happens, I call one of my family members or drive to wherever they are. I live with my boyfriend and he is aware of my feelings and triggers, so he is able to help me when needed. I have an emotional support dog who I plan on having trained as a service dog so she can go out in public with me. My main issue is that I mostly keep my feelings inside because I know I could always have it worse and there are many people out there who are dealing with loss, serious illnesses, or problems that cannot be fixed with medication. However, I have learned that if I keep everything bottled up inside, I am just making it harder on myself.

I hope to learn about the many types of mental health disorders this module. I want to know why they occur and what happens neurologically in these patients. These are some of the questions I would like to have answered: Is schizophrenia a disorder that a person is born with or do they develop it later on in life? Why do patients with mental illnesses choose not to take their medication when they know it will help them? In patients with dissociative identity disorder, are

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they often misdiagnosed and how can you tell when a person is going to “switch”? I am very excited to learn about the different types of psychiatric disorders and how they work. I am not sure if I would be the best psych nurse, but it is the specialty that I am most interested in.