

**Psychiatric Mental Health Reflection**

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### Psychiatric Mental Health reflection

I think that it's going to be really beneficial for me to learn more about Psychiatric Mental Health Disorders and gain clinical experience with patients who are diagnosed with Psychiatric conditions. My knowledge regarding mental health disorders is surface-level, which makes the idea of working with these patients a little intimidating. However, I think it's an important population to learn about, especially because there seem to be so many misconceptions surrounding Psychiatric Disorders. I personally believe that lack of knowledge surrounding mental illness often lends itself to maltreatment of the people who suffer from it, especially in the healthcare setting. That being said, I look forward to learning more so that I can better support these patients rather than be a hindrance to their wellbeing.

I'm grateful to say that the only personal experience with mental illness that I can think of having was what I would consider an extremely mild case of depression during my first year of college. In the moment I didn't realize it, but reflecting on it years later I think that I was showing symptoms of mild depression such as sleeping often, not wanting to leave my room, being unmotivated, not attending classes, etc. In my case, however, I think my sadness stemmed from situational factors rather than truly having a mental disorder. That being said, even my very brief experience with "depression" was debilitating and I failed an English class that semester because of not attending class/failing to do the assignments, even though they weren't difficult to do. While I don't consider myself to truly be affected by psychiatric/mental illnesses, having this experience has made it easier for me to see how a psychiatric illness has the ability to take over someone's life if they don't receive help or support. I have all the empathy in the world for those with mental illnesses, and can think of a number of people in my life who I know have struggled with mental illnesses that have gone untreated. My perception of mental illnesses is that they are so much more common than many people realize, and that our society does a great job of overlooking and/or ignoring them. Unfortunately, I think that avoiding the topic of mental illnesses undoubtedly leads to higher incidence or worse outcomes of said illnesses. Rather than

creating an open dialogue and building a community of people who can empathize and support one another, those experiencing mental illnesses are often left to “deal with it on their own.” In my opinion, mental illnesses are virtually impossible to overcome without support from others.

I can't say that I have too many fears or concerns regarding working with patients who have psychiatric disorders. I think generally speaking, a concern of mine when it comes to patients with psychiatric disorders is the idea of them being aggressive, or having aggressive outbreaks. I would hate to say the wrong thing to my patient or act in a way that my patient would receive as threatening and accidentally trigger a negative response. However, I think that this fear is based on misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about psychiatric disorders, as I previously stated. The only other concern that I can think of is being worried that the staff might not interact with their patients in a way that I'd be comfortable/agree with. No one is perfect and I understand that in the healthcare setting many employees struggle with “burn out,” but I feel that those with psychiatric disorders are more vulnerable in that they can't always advocate for themselves. I don't want a situation to occur in which I disagree with how a patient is being treated, but also have a hard time speaking up because of not knowing where I stand as a Nursing student.

My expectations are that I gain a better understanding of psychiatric disorders, and hope that my eyes are opened to any misconceptions that I may have regarding them. I'd especially like to learn about nursing interventions, or coping mechanisms that I can recommend to patients who present with certain symptoms or mental illnesses. Another takeaway that I'd like to gain from this module is being able to share this information with people outside of the healthcare setting. Stigmas about psychiatric disorders exist everywhere, and I feel like having the knowledge to turn them into teaching moments is a great way to help those who have them. Some questions that come to mind that I'd like answered include whether psychiatric disorders are caused more so by genetics or by environmental factors? I'm also curious about what particular tools/means are used to “officially” diagnose someone with a certain

psychiatric disorder? Another question would be if certain psychiatric disorders are more common in certain cultures/populations? And if so, what are the reasons for that being the case? I'm also curious about whether age plays a role in the type of psychiatric disorders a person has?