Happy Thoughts

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What is Mental Health, and why is it so important? Mental health affects the quality of life. Your relationships and your physical health. Contributing factors such as stress and anxiety can contribute to mental health disruptions. This can include conflicts with your family and friends. It is a state of well-being and determines how we can manage stress. Not everyone can cope with stress, and they manage it in a unique way. Checking on your mental health starts with asking yourself how you are feeling. Mental health is how we feel and how we think. It is important to recognize the symptoms of a declining mental health and seek treatment.

I have worked as a medical assistant in family practice for over ten years, so I have some clinical experience with patient's who have mental health disorders. I would screen the patients using our Anxiety and Depression screening tool. One patient I recall had came in for a follow up on depression. She stated she felt great with improved symptoms. That same patient was back within one week, crying and telling me how she lied at her last appointment because she did not want her spouse to worry about her. That opened my eyes to how well they can mask their symptoms and put on a happy face. People have a harder time accepting and admitting their illness than others and may even feel embarrassed so do not seek help. Culture plays a role in that area. For example, Hispanics who do not have a good support system avoid seeking treatment. They might fear the negative feedback from their parent's or peers. My perception on mental health is that everyone copes differently therefore treatments and remedies will differ between individuals. I think the person seeking help needs to have an open mind about treatment and be committed to finding the right help. I want these patients to know that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.

My fears and concerns about the mental health clinical setting would be something to do with self-harm or a patient hurting someone else. My great-grandmother committed suicide at an

early age and my grandmother was the one who found her. I do not really know how old my grandma was, but she was incredibly young, and she had to run to the neighbors to call for help. I always assumed she suffered from a form of mental illness. This does not affect me emotionally in anyway. I feel a suicide incident would be hard for anyone to encounter. Another concern would be I do not want to feel overwhelmed or drained from all the emotions. I am very self-aware and know how to manage my own feelings. I do not know what to expect from the residents. That is scary, you never know what type of mood that individual will wake up in. The unknown concerns me because you cannot plan around it. Though I like to see myself as flexible and being able to adapt to anything, I hope this will benefit me in any circumstance I may encounter.

My expectations are to be able to obtain therapeutic communication skills to deal with patients in challenging conditions. Understand there can be underlying conditions contributing to a patient's mental health illness. I want to be able to notice signs of declining mental health. I expect to learn and recognize psychiatric disorders. To be able to recognize which treatment the patient would benefit from. For example, diverse types of therapy are more effective based on the nature of the illness. I want to become familiar with the surrounding local services I can provide future patients with. One question I have is the link between a person's diet and depression. Like they say if you eat better, you feel better. Does mental health affect men and women differently and if so, why? What long-term effects can depression have on the brain? How can mental health affect sleep patterns? What are the benefits of and risk of delivering mental health care via technology instead of face to face? I want to take from this module the ability to provide useful resources and education to my patients. As well as help them find triggers and coping mechanisms.

References

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