

Journal Assignment

Jasmine Rodriguez

Covenant School of Nursing

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Mr. Ellis

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In today's world, mental health and mental illness has become a big and normalized topic to conversate about. Whereas in years before no one ever really spoke about mental health. It is important to start these kinds of conversations early on, so that people can be educated and know how to get help when it is needed. Growing up in a Hispanic household, I was never really taught anything about mental health or mental illnesses. My parents never believed in mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. I was taught that there was no such thing as being depressed or having anxiety, that it was something that you put yourself through, and that it was a choice. It wasn't until I was a freshman in college, taking psychology, that I learned what mental illnesses truly were. I had only ever known that there was depression and anxiety, I then learned that there were hundreds of different illnesses and disorders. Taking psychology really opened my mind and taught me what these illnesses were, and how they come to play. What I did not really get to learn in psychology is how to take care or speak to a person who is dealing with such illnesses. Now that I am in nursing school, I get to learn how to take care and educate patients and families about mental health and illnesses.

Nurses no matter what specialty they go in to, will almost always have patients that have mental health issues. The nurses that I have followed from module one until now have at least had one patient with a mental illness. The most common ones I had seen were anxiety, depression, and bi-polar disorder. My experience with these patients were like any other patients I had. They are normal people as well; they just need a little more care than others. One experience I have had, was more on the negative side. I was in the hallway walking to the nurse's station when a patient shouted out that they had needed help. I went into the room to see what I

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could help the patient with. Once I started talking to the patient, one of the nurses ran into the room to get me, that's when the patient then started screaming at me. They had told me that the patient had bi- polar disorder and had already assaulted a nurse. After that I was a little shaken up. Had the nurse not gone into the room, the patient would not have screamed at me, but they were just trying to protect me. I couldn't help but think if the nurses maybe treated him badly and that's what triggered the patient to scream. I went into the room not knowing that this patient had bi- polar disorder, so I had treated the patient as if they were any other patient. The patient was just fine until the nurse appeared. I think that once we find out that someone has such a disease or disorder, that's when we start treating them differently. We could instead use different approaches and find what kind of treatment and communication works best for these patients.

When people hear the term "mental illness," they tend to feel unsettled about it. People automatically think that "mental" means insane or crazy, which is not always the case. Movies and TV shows have set a negative image for this population. I wouldn't say that I don't have fears because we all do. I have heard stories of people jumping out of the hospital windows, people escaping, nurses or doctors being assaulted. Those are the stories that kind of scare me. Of course, those are just stories, I don't really know if they were true or just exaggerated. I feel that once I am in a setting with these people my perspective will change.

In this module I want to be able to open my mind and learn more in depth how these illnesses affect people and the people around them. I hope to learn how I as a nurse can advocate for these people and what resources I can give to them. Since we live in West Texas, what resources are available in this area and that are affordable? Three questions that I hope to find answers to in this module would be, one, how young is too young to start teaching about mental health and illnesses? Two, is medication always the right answer? And three, how can we help

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those patients who have families that simply do not believe in mental illnesses and treatment for them? I am eager to learn more about mental health. It is definitely a topic that is interesting and important to learn about.