

**Current Theories and Practices: Journaling Assignment**

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My feelings and attitude towards taking a course in psychiatric mental health nursing are mixed. I am excited because psychiatric nursing is very interesting to me, however, I have struggled with and have had family members struggle with mental health issues for several years. This makes learning about the process from the healthcare worker's perspective interesting because of how much it reminds me of past experiences. Every time I get to learn more about the process of psychology and psychiatric health care, I come out with more knowledge and understanding of myself and those close to me. My feelings are mixed, because though I am excited, I know myself and how I tend to hyper fixate on things I am worried about even if they do not matter. I have a positive attitude toward this course and new clinical experiences because I know I can learn a lot and gain new insight. I do not have any experience in psychiatric mental health nursing but am interested in seeing the day-to-day operations of a nurse in that field.

My experiences with psychiatric illness are limited to my own experience growing up with anxiety and depression. In my case the most likely source for these disorders is genetic. My mother has depression, my father has anxiety, and my sister has anxiety, depression, and attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Growing up with an older sibling who was always lashing out or having difficulties in a time where mental health was not as widely accepted or acknowledged as today is part of the reason I did not get diagnosed for a long time. My sister hated any therapy she went to and ended up stopping her ADHD medication and therapy altogether. I figured that if she did not feel she needed therapy, then my problems were not big enough to seek help or treatment. I did not want to cause any more trouble or burden for my parents when they were obviously overwhelmed with finding ways to help my sister. I realized I should probably talk to someone about this when I took psychology 101 and saw a few too many

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similarities between the signs and symptoms of depression and my own daily habits. I was very lonely and depressed throughout that year and at home in quarantine. When I was back in Lubbock, I started seeing a counselor who advised me to start taking medications and helped me see that life would not always be a mix of fear and hopelessness. In the fall of that year my sister was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for two weeks, then moved back home for the rest of her college semester. It was hard for me because I would go home and end up being the go-between for my parents and my sister. She eventually went back to school and graduated, and I went to nursing school the next year. I still go through ups and downs with my family and with myself, but that is where I am in my experience with psychiatric illnesses. I think the biggest thing my experience has taught me, is that you never know what someone is going through and that you are never alone, there will always be people there to help in different ways.

My fears and concerns about this module are mostly about how overwhelming it feels. I tend to be less and less inclined to start something the more challenging it seems because I am concerned I might do poorly or fail. I think what initiated that concern is that I grew up in a very 'smart' family. My parents both have advanced degrees and expect a lot from me. The kicker is, that I know they would still love me even if I failed, but I don't know how I would get over it. I get anxious when I cannot perfectly complete any task given to me. Nursing school taught me the lesson that what matters is how much effort I put in, not the exact score that I end up with. The only other concern I may have is, how much focus there will be on mental health issues? I am concerned about this because of how much time I will focus on my own illnesses and how much I will convince myself I have every issue we talk about. This concern is due to my worry and anxiety about having different issues going on. These emotions effect how I behave mostly by making me an overachiever who gets overwhelmed, which may cause me to procrastinate to

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avoid something that scares me. I have been doing well at time management so far and am focused on continuing that pattern.

I expect that this will be challenging and lead to looking into my own biases about mental health. I hope I will learn more about different mental illnesses and more about how to treat people with them. There are a few questions I would love to learn the answers to in this module, such as, what does a psychiatric nurse treat and do on a day-to-day basis? What levels of nursing care are there in psychiatric nursing? What have the nurses experienced that was not what they expected when they started in psychiatric nursing? I think that most, if not all of those questions will be answered, and I hope to gain insight on how to treat for patients going through hard times in their lives.