

Current Theories and Practice Journal Assignment

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## CURRENT THEORIES AND PRACTICE

Taking a course over mental health is nerve wracking for me because I have had many battles with mental health in the past. Starting from a young age I felt as if I was different from my peers, and I didn't feel like anyone understood how I was feeling. Around the age of twelve I felt depressed and as if no one cared about me because I was the middle child who often got pushed to the side. I started to seek attention from male peers and at the age of fourteen I was raped by an almost nineteen-year-old. My mental health started to spiral after this event, and I became severely depressed and began to self-harm. I was on many antidepressants trying to find one that would work for me, I made a list for any doctor's visits so they would know which ones hadn't worked and my list includes Paxil, Zoloft, Prozac, Lexapro, Luvox, Pristiq, Cymbalta, Effexor, Amitriptyline, Clomipramine, Wellbutrin, Viibryd, Trazadone, Trintellix, Buspirone, Latuda, and Seroquel. They aren't all antidepressants, but most of them are. My psychiatrist tried many different approaches but most of them didn't help, or they made my symptoms worse. I tried those medications over the span of 10 years, from the age of thirteen to twenty-three. I got pregnant at the age of seventeen and had my first son when I was eighteen. I was on bedrest in the hospital for 30 days and that took a toll on my mental health. The father of my son wasn't the best during that time, and I got really depressed. My son went to the NICU for 50 days and once we finally went home things took a turn for the worst. I was abused by my son's father, emotionally, sexually, and physically towards the end. I left him when my son was two months old and moved back in with my dad. My ex signed his rights over, so I didn't have to deal with that trauma anymore, but now I had to deal with the terrible thoughts about how it was my fault that my son didn't have a dad. My mental health was at an all-time low and I nearly committed suicide. I went to an inpatient hospital at The Plaza when it was still here, and I went to Sunrise once. I finally stopped self-harming at the age of nineteen. I never found a medication to help

## CURRENT THEORIES AND PRACTICE

me, and I realized my only hope was therapy. I went through years of therapy and just recently stopped going due to being busy and not being able to afford it.

I met my husband when I was twenty years old and we had two sons together, so now I have a 6-year-old, a 3-year-old, and an almost 2-year-old. My mental health was bad in 2019 when I suffered a traumatic miscarriage at 9 weeks along. I was told the baby was great and healthy, but I woke up at 3am on August 29, 2019 and delivered the baby at home. The heart was still beating and it was still in the amniotic sac. Obviously at 9 weeks along there was nothing that could be done, and I went into a deep depression. It took me a long time to get through it and I still feel like I am slowly healing from that trauma.

I was always seeking answers as to why I felt the way I do. I didn't feel like it was strictly depression and anxiety, I felt like it was something more than that. At first, I thought maybe it was borderline personality disorder, maybe even Depersonalization/Derealization, but this past year I was finally diagnosed with autism. My 3-year-old has severe autism and he is nonverbal. I started seeing a lot of myself in him with his quirks and the way he acts. I decided to dig deep and start all the research I could about autism, and I knew that it described me perfectly. I got an official diagnosis in March of this year. It was hard to accept, but it was also a good feeling to know that I finally know why I feel the way I do, and it made my childhood make sense for once. I am still wary about telling people because many people don't see it in me. They say I seem so "normal", but it is because I have learned to mask my whole life and fake it until I make it. This module will be the first time I tell instructors about it, and it is a good but scary feeling.

My fear for this module is that it will bring up a lot of old memories for me and cause me to start thinking about the bad things that have happened to me. I know I am strong enough to get past it and work through my feelings, but I am still fearful about how I might feel in the moment.

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For this module I expect to gain knowledge in how to help individuals who are struggling with mental illness and possibly get some insight on my own mental health struggles. My three questions for this module would be, what can I do to help someone during a schizophrenic episode, what are some good coping strategies for people with depression, and how can I help people as a nurse when they are struggling with mental illness.