Current Theories Journal

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NSG 1206: Childbearing Family and Acute Psychiatric Nursing Concepts

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In full transparency, I am a little bit apprehensive about psychiatric nursing. I'm not afraid of psychiatric disorders or caring for those with mental illness, but it is completely unfamiliar and new to me. It sounds very fascinating to learn about the various disorders and how we treat them, however to me it seems very unpredictable and highly individualized. With all other forms of medicine that are more focused on physiological illness, you are presented with a condition, and you have predictable and set guidelines for how to treat it. When dealing with mental illness and psychiatric disorders, on the other hand, there is so much room for interpretation and gray areas. A treatment that may work well for one person may go horribly for another. I really enjoy the process of observing a patient, talking to them about their symptoms, and being able to have an idea of what illness they have and how to bring about improvement. Mental illnesses, on the other hand, seem more obscure, and I almost feel helpless when trying to make those patients feel better.

I did not grow up in a household where mental illness was talked about or exhibited. It wasn't until I started to hit adolescence that I realized not everyone is happy and content. I used to be so confused about why anyone would have suicidal ideations, but it made more sense once I started to learn about conditions such as anxiety and depression. In other words, I was very naive to the concept of mental illness. This is a little bit embarrassing, but my first exposure to bipolar disorder came through a Lifetime movie. I was playing at my cousin's house one day and on the television, there was a movie about a bipolar woman who would be happy one minute and then get mad and push someone down a staircase the next. This is horrible, but ever since then, that has subconsciously been my perception of how individuals with bipolar disorder act in their

daily life. As I have grown older, videos from doctors on social media are now where I receive most of my education on this topic.

I really don't have any fears or concerns about Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. Thankfully, I don't have anything in my past that has given me a reason to be fearful about this aspect of nursing. I believe this is mostly the result of the education I have received over the last couple of years. Mental illness is not the individual's fault or the result of their own choices in most cases. Often, they have no control over their own actions, and they deserve just as much love and care as everyone else.

My expectation from this module is to get comfortable with treating and caring for patients with psychiatric and mental illnesses. I want to have a good idea of what they need so that they can feel safe and comfortable having me as their nurse. I have a feeling that my perception of mental illness is about to make a sizeable shift, and I am very thankful to have the opportunity to learn about this interesting topic.

It's hard for me to have questions on a subject that I am not familiar with, but here are a few of the ones that I have thought of. First, what is the boundary of holding people accountable for their actions and attributing it to psychological disorders and mental illness? If someone does something awful, how do we tell the difference between them making a conscious decision and them not processing their motivations and actions appropriately? Second, how does the chemical balance in our brains work and how does that contribute to mental illness? Finally, what is the best way to educate the public, especially children, on mental illness and can that prevent some of the cases we encounter? I have a lot to learn, but I deeply value this content. Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing is not limited to specific floors and specialties and at some point, I will have a psychiatric patient. I hope that this module will equip me well to meet their needs.