

Covenant School of Nursing  
Disciplinary Action Summary Assignment  
Instructional Module 2

Student Name: Hannah Mullen

Date: 03/31/2023

DAS Assignment # 2

Name of the defendant: Suzanne Ford

License number of the defendant: 508091

Date action was taken against the license: December 10, 2013

Type of action taken against the license: Revoked

*Use the space below to describe the events which led to the action(s) taken against the license. If multiple charges were in play, be sure and cite them, e.g. drug diversion, HIPAA violation, abandonment, forfeiture on student loans, etc.*

Charge 1: Lack fitness to safely practice nursing.

In June of 2008, Suzanne Ford was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder Type 1. This diagnosis also included psychotic features. The board determined that this diagnosis would deem her unfit for practicing nursing safely.

Charge 2: False and deceptive information.

On March 25, 2010, Ford answered "no" to a question in the Board of Nursing Online Renewal document which asked if she has been diagnosed with a psychotic or bipolar disorder.

Charge 3: Unprofessional conduct.

On October 25, 2012, Suzanne Ford's ex-husband committed suicide by taking an unknown amount of pills. Ford knew that he was suicidal and was watching him take a large amount of said pills and failed to intervene on October 24th. The morning of October 25<sup>th</sup>, her ex-husband had labored breathing and was unconscious throughout the day. Ford made no attempts at resuscitation and sat with her ex-husband until he stopped breathing. Once he stopped breathing Ford called emergency services. The BON determined that Suzanne Ford is likely to injure patients because she did not provide any help to her ex-husband while he was dying.

*Use the space below to provide a description of measures you think could have prevented any action being taken against the license and/or would have prevented harm to the patient, if harm occurred.*

In terms of the first and second charge, I would have told the Board of Nursing about the Bipolar disorder diagnosis. According to the charges, Ford withholding information about the diagnosis may have led

to more harsh disciplinary action. Her diagnosis may still lead to disciplinary action to her license, but because she is in treatment and would be upfront about it there is a chance for less consequences to her license.

For the third charge, I would have intervened as soon as I saw the ex-husband try to take the pills. This would have hopefully prevented him from loss of consciousness and labored breathing. In the event that he still took the pills, I would have called emergency services as soon as possible. This could lead to his stomach getting pumped and have a 5150 put in place. This would ensure that restrictive breathing and loss of consciousness would not occur or be caught early and treated, and that the ex-husband could get the psychiatric help needed.

*Identify which universal competencies were violated and explain how.*

I believe that one universal competency that Ford violates is patient safety and security. This is due to her Bipolar 1 diagnosis. While I do not believe that mental illnesses make a nurse dangerous, I do think that her actions in charge 3 prove that she is unfit to provide safe healthcare. Patient interactions are not present in these charges, but it can possible that Ford would not follow elements such as allergies, patient identifiers, or medication rights. Another violated universal competency may be standard precautions. I am unsure what precautions must be followed for an overdose or suicide attempt, but she did not follow any considering that she did not attempt to intervene at any point. Lastly, Ford did violate the critical thinking competency, which could also be due to the Bipolar disorder diagnosis. Ford did not think about what interventions to take while her ex-husband was taking pills or while he had restrictive breathing and was not able to gain consciousness.

*Use the space below to describe what action you think a prudent nurse would take as the first to person to discover the event described, in other words, you are the one who discovers the patient has been harmed by the nurse or you have discovered the impairment or criminal activity cited in the disciplinary action.*

It is difficult to say exactly what a prudent nurse would do in this situation. But, I believe if it were discovered that a nurse had been diagnosed with Bipolar disorder with psychotic features the first step would be to determine if she was getting treatment and was safe to be around patients. Regardless of whether or not she is, I think it is best for patient safety to alert the necessary people about her diagnosis. I do not believe that people with mental health disorders are dangerous, but if it is a disorder that is mandatory to declare, it is better to report it than to not. If I were to discover that a nurse had facilitated anyone's suicide, I would also report it immediately to the hospital and to the authorities if it is appropriate to. It is more than likely going to be unknown whether or not there was any foul play involved with the death, but I think that it is best to report an event like this in the off chance that there is so authorities can investigate the situation further.