

Dove Tree Reflection
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Description:

We arrived at Dove Tree and a client opened the door and let us in. We were directed to where we could eat breakfast and have coffee. We attended a meeting about processing. We then ate lunch all together and then attended some more sessions. There was lots of downtime to explore the property, play with the dogs, and chat with the residents. One of the dogs there was a chihuahua named Queso (I hope it's okay to reveal the dog's name), and every time the dog walked into the room, everyone would say "Queso!!!"

Feelings:

I felt very welcomed at Dove Tree, all of the residents were so friendly and kind. In the first group we sat in, one of the residents was graduating from the program that day and he would be headed home. He told us all about his family and how his addiction had left all of his children hating him and they wouldn't talk to him. He explained how difficult it is to stay sober when you're left with a life you aren't happy with and no skills to cope with that pain. It really gave me a great perspective on why people relapse and I have more empathy now for them.

Evaluation:

Overall, the day went great! I don't have anything bad to say about the experience or the facility. I learned a lot about addiction and broke down so many stereotypes about what the world tells you a person with an addiction should look like and act like. I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of interaction and participation the residents did. They all seemed to want to be there, want to get better, and took the sessions very seriously.

Analysis:

This situation reaffirmed the fact that substance abuse is a disease of the mind. These people needed treatment just like any other sick patient does. I don't believe I ever truly thought that addiction was a disease until today. I saw a lot of what I recognize to be cognitive behavioral therapy. The therapist had the residents listen to music that would trigger them and reminded them of their addiction and then have them talk through their feelings after. They described this as being helpful because some triggers you can purposely avoid but music is everywhere and sometimes more difficult to avoid.

Conclusion:

I learned that people fall into addiction through many different avenues like coping with other mental health disorders, social drinking/drug use, and family members exposing them to substances at a very young age. We listened to a man tell a bit of his story and it was heartbreaking. He had been given meth by a family member while he was in his teens. His father found out and told him it was okay, as long as he did it at home with him. The resident said that by him saying it was okay, that was the only validation he needed to justify his addiction and it sent him into a spiral. And although I couldn't personally relate to the struggles

these people were sharing, I could feel their emotions and imagine for a little moment what addiction must feel like.

Action Plan:

Overall, I learned a lot and enjoyed my time at Dove Tree. I don't think I would have done anything differently, since today was mostly just chatting and doing a lot of listening. I learned a great lesson that you can't ever assume someone is or isn't a person with an addiction just by looking at them and talking with them. These people are mother, fathers, students, grandparents and the list goes on. I hope to reflect on the stories I heard and experience from today while encountering such patients in my career. Having empathy, perspective, and tools for interacting with these patients will hopefully improve their outcomes and my nursing skills.