My Personal Views and Experiences Regarding Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing

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1. My Background

Overall I am excited and a little bit nervous about our Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Clinicals. I have a bachelor of arts in psychology. I have studied quite a bit of theory. I graduated with my bachelors in 2007 so it has been quite a while and it will be interesting to see what I remember. During my undergraduate degree there were not many opportunities for me to have any type of clinical experiences. It will be very interesting to me to actually be able to see first hand many types of disorders that I have previously studied. I am also worried that I might not remember as much information as I am hoping that I do. It will be a learning experience and give me an opportunity to dust off the cobwebs in my brain.

2. My Experiences and Perceptions

I don't have very much first hand experience with mental illness. I have had the most experience regarding addiction. I have a good friend of many years who has struggled on and off with opiate addiction. When she was craving she would do anything including stealing items from my house and trying to sell me gift cards in order to support her habit. After I became pregnant I distanced myself from her because I did not want her around my children much. The last time I talked to her she seemed to be doing well and holding down a job. As a friend of someone who has been lied to it is really hard for me to believe her. As I got older it was also very apparent to me that she seemed to honestly want to get a hold of her addiction and she tried multiple different rehab places. The disease of addiction can take over. I also have a family member who has dealt with alcoholism. At first it was hard not to blame myself or feel like I gave them excuses to drink. I also learned that the person has to WANT to change and stop otherwise it doesn't matter what you do as a family member or friend they won't change. With this family member it also became apparent to me how addiction can be a disease. This particular

person is a completely different person drunk than they are sober. I also learned that even when a person wants to reach out and get help that resources can seem hard to find.

3. My Fears and Concerns

I am worried that I will have a difficult time looking past the diagnosis or disease and at the person. I have an Uncle (who has recently passed) that was diagnosed with schizophrenia. As a young child I didn't really understand what that meant. My Uncle just always seemed a little off. I distinctly remember a conversation with my Mom in which she told me she didn't want me to be alone with him because he had a temper and was very jealous of my Dad's family. I feel like this conversation always kind of shaded the way that I viewed this person. I wonder if I would have had more of a relationship with him if I had been able to look past the diagnosis to the person. I know it will be different in clinicals and not being emotionally involved with patients but I just hope I am able to relate to our patients as a people and not their diagnosis.

4. My Goals and Questions

My main goal for this module is to learn how to talk to someone who happens to be diagnosed with a psychotic disorder. The few times I have tried to communicate with someone who was hallucinating or something I wasn't quite sure how to handle the interaction. Am I supposed to ignore or react to their hallucinations? A specific example I am thinking about happened at work when I was the secretary admitting patients through our obstetrical emergency department. I needed to get the patient's name and date of birth so I could put them into the computer so that she could be seen. The only way I could get this information was if I talked to her hallucination and then she would answer me. Was this the appropriate way to handle this situation? Another question that I would like answered is do we discuss the patient's diagnosis? For example is it polite to acknowledge the diagnosis and then move on to discuss whatever else

is needed for nursing management? Does this change from person to person or situation to situation? My last question that I hope to answer from this experience is what resources are available for people dealing with mental health issues that are readily available in Lubbock? In the past when trying to find resources they can seem to be scarce and I want to be able to refer any of my future patients or family members if they need help.