

Reflection Journal

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Current theories and practice journaling assignment

My feelings and attitudes towards the course are mixed. I have always been eager to learn psychology and mental disorders. When I started my journey in academics I wanted to focus on psychology and become a psychiatrist; I even have the DSM-5! I however, changed my mind and switched to nursing. I now want to pursue maternal because of the psychology and hormones that go into creating a human and the birthing process. I started working at Covenant and it gave me many opportunities to see psych patients. I am passionate about mental health and how it can change one's lifestyle. I do have some fear with psych patients due to my experience because there have been a few cases where they got violent. I had a patient physically try to hurt me and throw stuff at me and escalated to security getting called. I noticed the changes in the patient and constantly warned my nurse about these behavioral changes and she had brushed them off. From that experience I will not let this be something to shrug off. It taught me that behavioral changes are just as important as vital sign changes

I experience anxiety after covid, I used to never feel anxiety but since Covid I felt myself not wanting to go into stores and when I do I feel that I am in fight or flight. I also feel it more when there is an exam coming up or if something isn't going in the right direction. My perception about mental illness is that it is starting to get attention from social media and it is finally not ignored. I feel that in the past social media did not talk about mental illness because it is not something you can physically see, but now there is more support and advocates for mental illness! It is important that we take care of our mental health because the brain is the control center for the body. If the brain isn't at its fullest potential then there will be problems down the road such as not being able to concentrate and mood swings.

My fears and concerns are that a patient could get violent and put themselves in danger and the staff. I had worked with patients that had a mental illness and they were the friendliest people. I feel wrong for having the perception that they could injure me because of the one past experience I had with a patient. I am nervous on how to respond to these situations besides trying to calm a patient. These thoughts and emotions affect me because I find myself timid and I have that sense of fear in the back of my mind that the situation could easily escalate to something dangerous. I am open to listen about their experiences and I love to learn about what the patient is experiencing and how I could help in the hospital. The hospital can worsen someone's mental health because of the feeling of isolation and as nurses it is important to notice withdrawal from people and depression.

While working in the covid unit it was very common to see withdrawal and depression because family was not able to visit and the patient was not able to leave the room. One thing I did was try to talk to the patient and ask what they like to do! I always loved hearing people's stories because you could see their attitude change and it truly affects how they heal. There is one patient in particular that I think about, she was young and was in the unit for some time (close to a month). The nurses and I noticed her attitude slowly change, she started to be withdrawn and gave up on herself. I saw her nurse little by little give her more and more attention and care and she started healing fast and was on the road to recovery. Her attitude changed, she started fighting harder against covid and eventually got discharged. Interaction is key to recovering, if we as nurses are always in a rush and don't give that attention to our patients it could hinder their healing process and not just their mental health.

My expectations for this module is to learn as much as I can and advocate for mental health. My goal is to see the person completely and not just the medical aspects because the mind, body and soul are interconnected. I hope to learn more about the different kinds of mental illnesses and nursing interventions for each disorder! I want to be informed about behavioral changes that I need to look out for and how I can help my patient be on the road to recovery!

Three questions I would like to find answers to is, how as a nurse can I help patients when they are having suicidal thoughts? Are there ways I can prevent/ cope with a mental illness? And lastly, how can I as a student deal with anxiety in public and with exams? I am very excited to learn and I can't wait to see what this module brings to me and my classmates!