

Current Theories and Practice

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I am eager to learn all about psychiatric mental health, specifically psychotic disorders because it's not commonly seen or talked about very often. As opposed to the ones we are more familiar with such as anxiety, bipolar, substance abuse. Not to say that those are less important but more so how differently a person can be affected depending on the illness and severity. Throughout this past week during our OB lectures, we learned about postpartum psychosis and how some mothers experience serious mood changes such as confusion and/or hallucinations that can result in infanticide. Knowing that these innocent newborn babies lost their life due to the mother not seeking help or being under-treated breaks my heart. I believe all mental health disorders are very real and as important as any other illness. During this course I would like to learn pathophysiology, criteria to diagnose, risk factors, signs and symptoms, and treatment for these illnesses. Is treatment lifelong? Which disorders are the most difficult to diagnose? Which age group does this most commonly affect?

I am not familiar with psychiatric illnesses personally, but I do know they should be taken seriously and treated as soon as possible to prevent lifelong complications. I am aware there is a stigma surrounding mental illness because I grew up with certain family members who didn't believe in depression or anxiety because it was a sign of weakness. They now understand and believe these disorders are not fake after being diagnosed with one or the other. I believe some people have these negative attitudes or stereotypes because they are uneducated and unknowing until it happens to them or a close loved one. Growing up and experiencing some of the stigmas out there regarding mental health makes me want to be an even greater advocate for these patients that may feel worthless or just overall sadness. They shouldn't have to feel like a burden or alone while coping with their illness, they are real people who have feelings just like

the rest of us. This now makes me wonder if there is an increased suicidal rate within this population?

As to our clinical site rotations I have more concerns than fears at this moment because I know we will always be safe with a licensed nurse. A major concern I do have is a sense of helplessness for these patients. I want to feel as helpful and hands-on as possible during our clinical rotations, but I assume some of these PMH patients may not want our help. If that is the case, then I completely understand because this could be the most difficult time in their life. My goal as a student nurse is to communicate to my patients that I am here for them even if it's just me listening to them or if they allow me to help them to the best of my ability. I am feeling unsure right now because I do not know what to expect from this PMH rotation, but I am eager to learn the unknown.

My expectation from this module is to explore all clinical rotations with a willingness to learn and be supportive of all patients. Some of these patients may not have a good support system so we are there to ensure a safe and secure environment. My goal at the end of this module is to determine if psychiatric nursing sparks my interest beyond graduation. I am curious to observe the nurse's roles and responsibilities while working with psychiatric patients. Is it dangerous at times? What are the different communication strategies you use to talk to patients with certain disorders? Are there certain occasions when the treatment plans don't work or must constantly change? Three disorders I am interested in learning about are schizophrenia, borderline personality, and dissociation. What are the common side effects of antipsychotic medications? What are the causes of schizophrenia? Are any of these mental health illnesses related to genetics? I am looking forward to this experience in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing and hope all my questions will be answered through lectures and clinical opportunity.

