Current Theories and Practices

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Module 6

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My overall feelings towards taking a course that is directed towards caring for patients with mental health issues are positive. Mental health is a topic that I am very familiar with and something that I have been exposed to and struggled with from a young age. When I was in middle school, a lot of my friends began struggling with depression and anxiety and a couple of them were even self-harming. I felt like I had to step up and be the strong one for them even though I was struggling with the grief of losing my aunt, who was like a second mother to me, and my parents' divorce. I have always been kind of closed off with my emotions and I tend to keep things that I struggle with to myself. I have always felt like everyone's problems are worse than mine and that if I wanted to talk about my feelings that it would burden my friends and family who always seem to be facing tougher battles. My best friend 's mother is a drug addict and was always stepping in and out of their family. We practically grew up staying at each other's houses and were inseparable. When she began self-harming, I was incredibly terrified. I had no idea how to handle the situation and as a young middle schooler, I was scared to reach out to an adult with the fear that she would not want to be my friend anymore. I would do everything I could to be there for her, to let her talk to me about anything and everything, but despite my efforts, she continued to self-harm. Once we got into high school, she finally stopped self-harming, but she continued to suffer with depression and anxiety and still does to this day. I have encouraged her countless times to seek professional help, but she has yet to do so. I have many regrets when I look back on this experience. I wish that I had reached out to her father or grandmother and maybe she could have gotten the help that she needed at a younger age. I also regret not being there for myself because I was trying to take care of everyone else at the time. I wish that I would have reached out to a therapist or even the school counselor so that I could have been a better example for my friends. However, because of this experience, I take mental health very seriously and I realized that my struggles and feelings are just as important as everyone else's. While sometimes I feel that I am alone and I have

no one to talk to about my mental health, I realize that is not the case and that I must open up to let my support system know that I am struggling.

Going into this module, I fear that I might not be able to relate to some of my patient's struggles. I never want to come off as being sympathetic, but rather empathetic. I like to think of myself as an empathetic person, but I am scared to say the wrong thing or not know how to approach certain situations that I might encounter during this module. Because of my past experiences, I feel as though I tend to come off as kind of apathetic sometimes because I have gotten so used to being a strong person and not letting my emotions show. However, on the inside, I care deeply about people and their struggles. I want to learn how to better empathize with my patients to let them know how much I truly care, and I want to help them get the resources that they deserve to improve their mental health. I am excited to learn about the different psychological disorders that people struggle with daily and how I, as a nurse, can help make a difference in their lives. I find the brain and the mind fascinating, and I am interested to see how much of a role it plays in our health, as a whole system. Because of my past experiences and regrets, I hope that I will come out of this module equipped with the knowledge that I need to be an advocate for my patients and familiarize myself with the many different resources that are available for mental health. The three questions that I would like to have answers to during this course are:

1. How do I handle a patient and ensure they are still receiving the same quality of care that I would give all my patients when they are posing threats to my safety?

2. How do I remain supportive and strong for my patients while also showing empathy and emotion?

3. What are some coping mechanisms outside of medication or religion that are beneficial for mental health?

In conclusion, I am looking forward to learning more about mental health and how important it is for me to understand it in my professional and my personal life.