

## **Journaling Assignment**

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I struggled to start typing this paper because it brings new emotions and feelings I've never had to come to face with. To start I grew up in a small farm town that didn't really acknowledge mental health and has the mentality to "toughen up". With that being said when I turned 18 and moved to Lubbock Texas for school it was clear I would have quite the learning curve. My feelings around it were confusion. I thought something was wrong with me because I couldn't get over my anxiety with school and depression associated with not seeing my family. Though those words were said the definitions were not fully understood until I had time to acclimate and truly understand that what I was feeling was normal. My true feelings on taking this course is excitement and nervousness. To explain I'm excited but in honesty I have no idea on how to approach someone with a mental health illness and I get quite uncomfortable with situations revolving around it. I would love to learn how to advocate for a patient and better learn how to help and understand their feelings. I'm nervous because I want to be good for them, I want to truly comprehend what's happening and be the best nurse I can be to get patients the help they need. Being in college, it's a common occurrence to have classmates or friends that will confide in you with their feelings. I try to respond with positivity with hopes to cheer them up. I would say depression is the mental illness I'm most exposed to. If I'm better equipped to help others, I would be more eager to provide assistance.

My experiences have been either supporting friends with depression, dealing with bipolar disorder in a family setting, and old school belief that mental illnesses are not real. As I stated before I don't have a vast knowledge and mostly have avoided situations that make me uncomfortable. It's so difficult to see someone you love going through something you know nothing about. I know some people that take medications daily and others who decline to see they even have a problem. As a first-generation student when I bring new information home an

old school family tends to be a hard audience to teach or provide information too. My perception is that people tend to listen more to those who show confidence and can answer questions with ease to not cause discomfort to anyone. My personal experience with mental illness is that I go through times of depression and deal with anxiety involving stressful situations and large amounts of people. I find it a challenge to smile sometimes when I feel to be struggling inside. My anxiety causes me to feel safest at home most days or in my comfort zone. That being said I absolutely don't have days like this constantly. Moods mostly come in waves but I feel very blessed with my life. I can confidently say most times going to the gym or spending time with family helps pull me out of my change in mindset.

I feel that my biggest fear is disappointing someone that needs me. It's such a sensitive time that I worry I will be the reason someone is not understood or helped properly. That fear just stems from me being the type of person that thrives on words of affirmation. With patients that have mental illness clearly it's a long hard road to finding a normal baseline. Mentally I worry that I can't handle trying to help someone through something I don't fully understand yet. My other fear is dealing with a family or a person who doesn't believe mental illness exist. I've already experienced families in the hospital who don't support their children through difficult times. To me I just hope for the confidence to stand up for my patients and advocate for them through whatever treatment is needed.

Coming into this module my goal is to have an open mind and be a sponge. I don't have a very broad education of this subject so I'm not exactly sure what to expect. I have goals and high hopes for this module. The topics covered are not something I wish to specialize in, but I do intend to be knowledgeable about them. For my questions I wish to be able to handle difficult situations that can sometimes make me uncomfortable. I want to learn how to have the

confidence to handle these situations even if it may be a challenge. Next, I would like to learn more in depth about the medications and how exactly we can help patients with them. With so many misconceptions about medications I want to be able to answer questions patients might have about the benefits and risks. I have heard many people say that they don't want to get on medications because they refuse to be on them the rest of their life. I would like to know if that's true if these medications were something they would have to continue or be taken as needed. Finally, I would like to know how we as nurses can better support hospitals or organizations who are trying to inform the general public and provide support to patients with mental illnesses. Even as a student to see the voices we have and power to make change is extraordinary. I would love to see what is possible for us to do in order to see a memorable change in our health care system. I look forward to this next eight weeks and be able to better understand Psychiatric mental illness.