

Journaling Assignment

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Mental health is something I am very passionate about and excited to learn about. I firmly believe the saying “Mental health is health.” I feel as though for many years people have separated the two, however, there is not one without the other. There is a direct correlation between mental and physical health. If your mental health is suffering, it can very quickly affect your physical health and vice versa. I think it is very important as healthcare professionals that we acknowledge this correlation and are equipped with the tools to treat it to the best of our abilities. I personally feel as though in recent years the stigma around mental health has lessened but there is still lots more we can do to improve it. My biggest concern about taking this course and having clinical experiences in psychiatric mental health nursing is learning how to communicate with these patients. I feel as though this may be a challenge because these patients are in very vulnerable states so it is important to say the right things and be patient with them. These patients are not always in clear mindsets and can very easily become aggressive towards themselves and others so I just worry about knowing how to handle and de-escalate situations. Overall I am very excited and eager to learn.

Psychiatric illnesses are something that runs through my family and something I have personally dealt with my whole entire life. I have seen many different perspectives on psychiatric illnesses throughout my life. I have been the worried family member caring for a loved one with a psychiatric illness and I have also been the patient. I have suffered from generalized anxiety disorder, seasonal affective disorder, suicidal ideation, and body dysmorphia. Thankfully, I had an amazing support system and a family that normalized talking about our mental health so I was able to get the help I needed to manage these disorders. I, however, am very aware that this is not normal for everyone. Many people go their whole lives hiding their feelings and completely unaware of what mental health truly is. I hope as a nurse I can help to break these negative

connotations and help patients normalize talking about their feelings and helping them understand that they are not alone.

Due to my generalized anxiety disorder, I have a multitude of fears and concerns that range from rational to completely irrational. My biggest fear is simply not being good enough. This is a fear that is present in almost every area of my life. I fear not being good enough or smart enough to be a nurse. I fear not being a good enough daughter. I fear not being a good enough sister or friend. I fear not being a good enough partner and that I will never be in a long-term relationship due to this. I believe this was initiated by my perfectionate tendencies. During my adolescence, I felt as though I needed the validation of others to be complete and that I would get this by having the best grades, being the fastest, scoring the most points in basketball, and so on. In recent years I have managed this and have been able to cope with it better but there are still days I strive to be good enough in every area of my life. I also have a very big fear of losing loved ones. This past year, in the span of 3 months, I lost two family members unexpectedly, and ever since then, I have a constant fear that I will get another phone call saying I have lost another loved one. I understand that these feelings are valid due to the situation but I still am working to face this fear so it does not continue to interfere with my everyday life.

My goal for this module is to become more empathetic. I hope to see many different perspectives and to care for all patients with the same level of care no matter their background. I hope to be there for patients in a time of need and be there to support them during this challenging time of their lives. Some questions I hope to find answers to in this module are, What is the best way to communicate with these patients? I hope to learn the most effective ways to communicate with patients in manic states. I also hope to learn more about substance abuse

nursing because this is a profession I am interested in pursuing one day. This past year I lost my brother-in-law to an accidental overdose. Once he passed we learned about his addiction that he had hidden from everyone. I often wish we could have gotten him the help he needed. I hope that maybe one day I can provide help and support to others so other families do not have to experience the heartache my family did. I also hope to learn more ways to be an advocate for mental health. This is a subject that is very dear to my heart so I hope as a nurse I can do my part to spread awareness and help those suffering in silence. Overall I am very eager and open to learning about psychiatric mental health nursing.