

**Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing: Journal Assignment**

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I, personally, feel apprehensive and excited about these upcoming clinicals, especially for psychiatric mental health nursing. I have heard a plethora of good and bad stories from a large variety of nurses from different hospitals and states. However, my personal experiences while working with patients with psychiatric mental health issues have not been the kindest. When working with patients, I always try to maintain a positive outlook for the day. When working with patients, I look forward to caring for them and seeing them improve their health through different nursing, pharmacological, or non-pharmacological interventions. I feel this same feeling for my patients, whether they have psychiatric issues or GI issues; the list goes on and my care does not discriminate. My concern for these upcoming clinicals is my physical safety because I have had several experiences with different psychiatric patients. For example, I have had patients with psychiatric illnesses grab me by the collar of my shirt or grab my wrist because they did not enjoy having a bed bath at that moment. Usually, I noticed, this would occur with my CIWA patients. I understand that they are not mentally all together during this period of time, so I am very aware of that fact. When their family members come to visit, I notice that they become more defensive about the patient by saying “he’s usually not like this”. In the moment that the patient grabbed me, I was terrified. However, when I see them with their family, I realize that they are healing and that they do not mean to scare me. Not only is the patient going through it, but the family as well. Having family members in the room makes me think, “What if this was my family member? How would I expect the nurse to give care to my family if they were uncontrollably acting this way?”

My fears and concerns regarding psychiatric mental health nursing are, solely, my safety. It is one thing to be grabbed by the collar or wrist, but it’s another if I get physically hurt, badly, by a patient. I have had coworkers get bitten by patients. I think that’s terrifying, especially

knowing how dirty the human mouth is and what infections may arise from the bit. Although I give care to my patients, I am still wary of potential negative outcomes that may possibly occur. It is good to remind yourself that “it only takes one time” for something bad to happen. I think what triggers me the most is when they pull me close to their face. I can hear clearly. If there are any concerns, I do not mind hearing an individual out, but I cannot stand when the proximity is over my personal space. I notice, due to past experiences, that I become very angry when grabbed, so I step out of the room if the scene is safe for the patient to be alone. I do not yell or snap at the patient, but I quietly get upset. I usually take a breather, then return to the nurse I was assisting or shadowing where we debrief or continue care. With that said, I think it is good to remind yourself of the potential negative; rather than acting as if nothing bad can happen in this situation. At the end of the day, we cannot control how others will act and it is good to stay on your toes.

Switching gears, I think it is very important to be open-minded to patients with psychiatric mental health issues. We never know what someone is going through or what they have been through that caused them to act the way they act. Another thing to keep in mind is to practice empathy. Being an empath is extremely important in the field of nursing. I believe that putting ourselves in the patient’s shoes will help with the care we give. I am excited to learn more about different psychiatric mental health issues to better understand the illness, and implement nursing interventions to give the best care I can possibly give to my future patients.

My expectations for this course and clinical experience are to increase my knowledge of the psychiatric nursing world. Gaining a better understanding of my patients and their ailments will allow me to improve the care that I give to my patients. I hope to learn more about different psychiatric illnesses and differentiate between psychiatric illnesses versus illnesses that cause

cognitive issues that can lead to psychiatric disorders. Questions I would like to have answered by the end of this course are “What is CIWA and what nursing interventions can I perform to help the patient improve in health?”, “What are different personality disorders and what can I do as a nurse to help these patients?”, and lastly, “After this module, can I see myself as a psychiatric nurse?”.