Journal Assignment: Week 2

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Module 6

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Ever since I learned that we would have a module devoted to psychiatric mental health I have been counting down the days until I was there. I have always found the mind and mental health disorders to be fascinating. I am also a big advocate for mental health and the importance of taking care of “you”. I plan to be very open-minded during this module and try to understand each patient and their psychiatric disorder to help me better myself as a nurse. I feel like we sometimes get so wrapped up in a patient’s medical diagnosis and treating them medically that we forget to treat the patient as a whole to include their mental health. So, I am looking forward to learning how to treat the patient as a whole during our clinical rotation through the psychiatric block.

Most of my experiences with psychiatric illnesses stem from my family and even myself. My grandfather suffered from manic depressive disorder, PTSD, and was thought to have Schizophrenia. I remember a time when I was about 6 or 7 years old when my grandfather who had been triggered, chased my grandmother and me out of the house with a shotgun. He told us that if we ever came back home, he would shoot us. My grandfather would never in his “right mind” hurt us, but at this moment he thought that he was back in the war and was fighting off enemies. It was a traumatic event but at the time I was so young I didn’t realize the extent of what I had witnessed and gone through. My mom also suffers from manic depressive disorder and bipolar disorder, my grandmother suffers from depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder, and I suffer from depression and generalized anxiety disorder. I have also had many childhood friends and family who suffered from depression and unfortunately lost their fight. Needless to say, I have been surrounded by psychiatric mental health illnesses most of my life, but I still feel like I have so much to learn. I hope by learning more about psychiatric mental

health illnesses that I can spread awareness to the world as I feel like it's not well understood or talked about.

I think my biggest fear and concern for this module or more so for a career in psychiatric mental health would be that I couldn't do enough to save or help a patient. As I previously mentioned I have lost many of my friends/family to suicide. I understand that not all psychiatric patients will suffer from depression or be a suicide risk, but I would be haunted by the thought of whether I could have done more if something were to happen. I know of course that if I did everything I could for my patient it wouldn't be my fault if something happened, but I just worry that I would still hold on to that "what if" feeling. I assume that this fear is related to the friends and family that I lost to suicide as I often feel this way about their deaths. While having this fear is likely not the healthiest for me, I believe that it will better me as a nurse as I will do my best to be more observant for cues that may tell me a patient needs further evaluation or help. Another fear is that there is just a tremendous amount of different psychiatric mental health disorders out there and everyone who suffers from mental health disorders don't all present with the same symptoms, so I worry that I won't recognize a patient in need. I am looking forward to learning more about different illnesses so that I can lessen this fear.

My expectations for my time in psychiatric mental health is to gain vital skills and knowledge to help care for and communicate with patients suffering from mental illnesses. It is my goal to be able to better understand what is going on in the mind of someone who has a mental health disorder so that I can provide the care they need. If nothing else, I hope to make a difference in a patient's life who needs it. To conclude this journal entry the three questions that I have for this module are: How can I better identify a patient in need of immediate help? How can I approach a mental health patient appropriately and without triggering them? My last question is

how I can as a nurse even if I don’t choose psychiatric care as a specialty, utilize the skills built during this module to spread awareness and better care for future patients.