

## **Journaling Assignment**

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I am interested to learn about different psychiatric disorders and what role nurses play in psychiatric mental health nursing. I am curious to see what the nursing responsibilities are as I have no frame of reference yet. I am nervous for clinicals, as I am for all clinicals, but I am somewhat reassured since we will be with a nurse. With that, I am looking forward to seeing how the nurses interact with the patients. I am concerned that I will make someone feel worse or not know how to react if someone acts unpredictably. Additionally, I am curious about the simulation as well to work on therapeutic communication.

I don't have any experience with psychiatric illnesses myself. I know a couple of people who take medication for anxiety and depression, but I haven't dealt with it directly. My perceptions about mental illnesses are that they come from a combination of genetic and environmental factors. I had classes in college about addictive disorders and recovery, so I remember some about that. I know addiction specifically can come from life experiences. Mental illness can affect anyone, even those who seem to have everything going for them. It can be difficult to see if someone is dealing with mental illness or isn't doing as well mentally, whether you're close to them or not. It may be that it gets very bad before someone else notices or for them to get help, or for them to see that they need help. There is stigma around mental illness and getting treatment or taking medication for it. The stigma makes it harder for people to get help when they need it. I know some people believe that they shouldn't take medication and that God will fix them, but I believe in medication. I believe it is important to get help whether that is therapy, medication or anything that is needed because otherwise, the person will not get better. It is equally important that people know that it is not something to be ashamed of. I appreciate when people are honest about it so that over time, the stigma can go away. Furthermore, if

someone is open about their experience, it may educate someone so they know the signs and can know that a behavior of theirs that they consider normal was a symptom of mental illness and they can get help for it. I know the stigma has gotten better, but hopefully these actions can improve that even more.

I'm worried I will say something wrong that makes a patient react badly or unexpectedly, although this is a thought I have for every patient, not just for psychiatric mental health. This comes partly from when I used to work at Texas Tech housing and had to answer calls from angry parents. In that scenario, some would not be appeased by anything I said and only become more irritated. I never want to make someone feel worse. To avoid this, I don't talk as much. If I don't talk as much, that will hopefully lower the chances of me upsetting someone, but it also means that I am not as welcoming, comforting, and informative to patients. I am worried that I won't know what to say or react to someone who is unpredictable.

My expectations are that I will see a variety of mental illnesses and can identify them. I expect to see nurses communicate and interact with psychiatric patients. I expect to learn the differences between many mental illnesses and the different categories of medications that treat them. I hope to be able to connect a mental illness, the manifestations and the nursing interventions and maybe see some of that in clinical. I hope to learn about different disorders, so I can understand how patients think and act differently because of their disorders. I hope to learn about what else nurses can do with therapeutic communication or otherwise to help these patients that is not simply giving medication. I also want to know more about how each disorder occurs in the brain and how that translates to manifestations that we can see. I specifically want to know more about depression, anxiety, and OCD, but many disorders seem interesting to me. I want to learn about the realities of getting treatment or medication and the barriers to that.