

**Current Theories and Practice Journaling Assignment**

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When I first started nursing school I was dead set on being a psychiatric nurse. Now that I am here in the module that has psychiatry as one of the main focal points, I'm unsure about how I feel. Growing up I had always known that I wanted to be a nurse and as I got older mental health became something very prevalent in my life. I have experienced the harsh reality that can occur when someone does not receive the help they need or simply refuse it. On the flip side I have also witnessed the good that can come from admitting you need help and being given the resources to ensure that you get it.

Someone very close in my day to day life has bipolar disorder that unfortunately goes untreated to this day. With that being said, I have seen just how important it is to help those that suffer from these disorders in order to limit damage to themselves and to those around them. With being around this person daily for multiple years there are things now that I carry into my adult life. I struggle with the feeling that I will someday be just like her and it often sends me into panic attacks. I have also experienced the feeling of defeat that comes from watching someone you love turn to substances that are risking their life due to their depression. I often felt helpless in the times that I knew what was going on but couldn't stop it or make them feel any better. By the grace of God I have since gotten at least one of these individuals to seek help and they are a totally different person. As I've gotten older I have seen the stigma around mental health starting to lift and although I do feel that often times the terms 'anxiety' or 'depression' or even 'mental health' are taken advantage of and often misused I am grateful that the conversation has been brought to light so that hopefully anyone who is suffering in silence does not do so due to the stigma around it.

Dealing with these things at such an early age I developed triggers that I wish I hadn't. I find myself shutting down and even beginning to panic when I hear yelling or loud arguments. I also have triggers around the use of alcohol in the sense that I cannot be around people who get loud when drinking and I frankly do not like being around anyone drinking that I do not know. When I first went to therapy in 2020 for these issues that I was unaware were impacting me so much and finally divulged all of the things that had been pent up inside me I felt very free. I had a new found understanding for myself as well as gained more sympathy for others that deal with the repercussions that can come from dealing with a parent, sibling or even partner that struggles with these types of illnesses. As much as I would like to say that I am excited to help others that need it I would be lying if I didn't also say that I am intimidated by this and anxious about how being put in these situations will make me feel. I work very hard in my day to day life to be aware of my triggers and to manage my surroundings by ensuring I do not put myself in situations to be triggered. My only concern with this is that I want to be able to put the patient first and to help them regardless of my own triggers but I am worried that I will freeze up or begin to panic if a situation ever arises where I am being yelled at. Although I see these triggers as a weakness I am also grateful for my awareness of them. I feel that although I would have preferred to learn about these illnesses second hand I have a unique understanding and empathy when it comes to patients who are in need. I am optimistic that I will be able to differentiate between my personal situations and the situations that may be at hand when it comes to dealing with a patient in distress.

During this module I hope to learn about the different ways to help those that suffer with these types of mental illness. I hope to restore my love for helping people that do deal with mental issues and I hope to be able to learn about these illnesses deeply in order to be a voice for those that may not be able to speak up for themselves when it comes to their mental health. I expect this module to challenge me in more ways than just academically. I expect that I will be uncomfortable in some moments but I also know that with uncomfortability comes growth which is what I am most excited for. Some questions that I have that I hope to answer are: are there support groups for family members that deal with the stress that can come from dealing with a loved one that suffers? How has the conversation of mental health changed over these last few years? Is there a way to make mental health services free without the need for insurance? And are there any other resources we can be providing to our patients to help them? These are just a few of the questions that I have and hope to be able to either come up with an answer for or be able to answer by the end of the module.