Psychiatric Mental Health

Journal Entry

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Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing can present us with a wide range of unique challenges, as well as rewarding experiences. For me personally, I am nervous about the population that we will be learning about, due to the vast nature of psychiatric mental health disorders and how extensive treatment can be. I also have very little experience in working with psychiatric mental health patients. Despite this, I am excited about getting the opportunity to learn and grow as a nurse and will find that this opportunity will provide me with a better understanding of the mental health field.

One of my perceptions of psychiatric illness is that most of the time, patients tend to go undiagnosed due to fear of being labeled and casted out by society. In our society, everybody has a want or need to feel accepted, to some extent. If a person with a mental health disorder feels different, they may isolate or try to hide behaviors that can draw negative attention as best they can. With mental illness, this makes it even tougher to seek treatment. The family and friends of the individual may choose to ignore the fact that it is an issue, and instead seek to outcast or downplay the individual's behaviors. I believe that a lot of these families do this, instead of using encouragement, simply because they do not understand what is going on. Another perception I have of mental health is that not every patient that has schizophrenia or bipolar disorder will present the same way with the exact same behaviors. There is a broad spectrum to what everyone will present with. This may depend on the patient's mood, the environment, or even the hospital setting. This can make it difficult to diagnose and treat a patient with a mental health disorder. When it comes to a heart attack or stroke, most patients will present with similar signs and symptoms. With mental health disorders, this may not be the case. I also believe the patients that do receive treatment may not be able to adhere to the regimen given to them. They may deem it unnecessary to give others a reason to view them as being different. Some the patients may also be unable to hold a steady place of employment due to their disorder and the behaviors it can cause.

Another perception is that the patient's family may view the disorder as the cause of their lack of care or parenting mistakes. Guilt, fear, and may other negative emotions can create an unsafe environment for patients who are seeking treatment, to cope with their behaviors. Siblings and other relatives may also distance themselves from the patient, out of fear of association or danger for not only themselves, but their loved ones.

My fears and concerns primarily involve not having enough experience to be able recognize cues or symptoms that indicate the behavior has changed, or how to best approach and react around patients who need higher levels of care. For example, with bipolar disorder, it may be difficult to provide education with treatment, when the patient is accustomed to living with the disorder their entire lives. I also feel like with experience, comes confidence. In this case, I will have a harder time conveying key educational points with patients who already are struggling with a disorder that they may not understand themselves. Also, with the families, how would I be able to help them understand what type of disorder and the different behaviors it can cause.

My expectation for this module is to gain a better understanding of what holistic care and treatment for mental health disorders involves. This applies not only to the patient, but also to the family and each discipline involved in the patient's care, in the hospital setting. I expect to get a general idea of how the different psychiatric disorders impact everyone, and what can also impact treatment for each disorder. I also would like to learn which medications are given, and what contraindications and side effects these could have. One of my questions would be about how long do patients typically take to seek treatment, and what caused them to seek supportive measures? Or what resources can we provide to the patients and their families? Also, what is our duty as nurses to make sure that we can collaborate and communicate patient care with other disciplines in the hospital setting? Lastly, what disorders can we manage with medication, and what disorders do we use a non-pharmacological approach with?