

**Current Theories and Practice**

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Instructional Module 6 Assignment

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March 27, 2024

Everyone has their own experience with mental health. Whether it be depression and anxiety or something like schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder amongst many other mental disorders. Mental health is more than just the way you feel it can affect you not just emotionally and mentally but also physically. Often times everyone's mental health just gets overlooked and it becomes this type of stigma. I from experience believe that you don't really stop believing that stigma until you yourself experience it.

For me my first ever experience with mental health was of course a surprise to no one... 2020 and the infamous COVID-19. I am sure that I am not the only one. This was a very rough time for everyone and most definitely something I had never experienced before. At first it was all fun and games our spring break got extended. And extended. And extended yet again until finally they announced that school was done for the year. And of course, being 17 years old I wasn't really that mad about it, all I heard was that I got a longer summer and I got to hang out with my friends. Well, little did I know that there was a quarantine that I did not think about. What did not help matters either was the fact my childhood home where I was living with my parents was in the middle of absolute nowhere so there wasn't much to do. Don't get me wrong, the beginning was great. I finished watching a bunch of shows and then quite a few movies as well. But as you can figure that go old very quickly. So, I will say I did experience my fair share of depression it just felt like there wasn't much to look forward to but luckily for me, my parents only made me quarantine for about 6 weeks so about mid-April I was able to go out and pretty much do whatever I wanted besides all the places that were closed. So, I got an extra long summer but those 6 weeks were very rough for me especially considering I had never had a problem with depression before.

My next experience with depression was when I left my hometown to go to college. Everyone was so excited and so happy for me. I had just graduated 7<sup>th</sup> in my class out of like 400 people and was going to college at a D2 university on full ride basketball scholarship. I was living the dream or what I always thought was the dream. But very shortly after I played my last high school basketball game, I knew my playing days were over. But my parents already had paid so much money for me to get the exposure to even earn that full scholarship. So, I felt like I owed it to them to do that. But the problem with that was that I was living a very demanding lifestyle of being a collegiate athlete, but I wasn't doing it for me, I was doing it for my parents. It was by far the hardest time of my life because this even led me to resent the game that I once had loved with my whole heart. So, I really was stuck between a rock and a hard place. I didn't know what to do. How do I give up a game that I had played for over 12 years. So, I powered through and kept going. Until it got to the point where I would literally do nothing with any of my friends or anything at all besides school and practice, I would just sit in my dorm in the dark and just cry. It's something I had never dealt with before. I didn't know how to handle it or who to talk to. As far as everyone is concerned back home, I am killing it and living my best life. But it eventually got to be too much for me, and I talked to my parents, and I made the decision that my basketball days were over for me. So, I met with the head coach, and I let them know that I was quitting and that this is what is best for me both mentally and physically. It did make a little better, but I never really got better or was no longer depressed until I was no longer at that university. It was a very long 3 months but the fact that I finished the semester and finished all of my classes and then transferred out I was very proud of myself. Because I had never experienced anything in my life like that like I don't even know how to put into words just how bad I felt in this time period. But I am here now, and I got better and I couldn't have done it without my

family. As much as I loved the game my mental health was more important and to this day, I still do not regret this decision one bit.