

Psychiatric Mental Health Journal

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If you would have asked me last year what mental health means, my response would have been vague and uncertain. I could talk about psychiatric disorders that I have learned throughout college, but I lacked an intimate connection to grasp the concept of what all is involved with mental health. This year, everything has changed. I found myself intertwined within the matrix of understanding just how damaging and life-changing mental health struggles can be.

Twenty twenty-four started off as a normal year for our household and the months were flying by as I attended school. In March we were hit with a trainwreck of a viral illness that left a long-lasting chest pain for my wife. We did not think much about it at the beginning and shrugged it off as costochondritis, but my wife became much more worried when the pain became very persistent for weeks. The pain and uncertainty quickly began to overwhelm her emotions, which opened the door for anxiety to take control. Months drove by as the anxiety began to fully embody itself as health anxiety. It started with an intense focus on her heart and heart rate, which rapidly escalated into genuine physical symptoms resembling a heart attack and atrial fibrillation. One night during a panic attack, her apple watch alerted her twice stating she was in a-fib. This was the biggest turning point with my understanding of anxiety, up to this point I selfishly shrugged off a lot of her feelings and concerns and attempted to redirect her with all my novice medical knowledge, but this night I realized I could have been completely wrong and neglected her expressions for help. Fortunately, we left the emergency room with good news and a diagnosis of palpitations. We both thought this would have marked the end of the feelings, because we had just received medical confirmation on her heart health. However, the focus immediately shifted away and onto other heart related issues that could have been found that night. We spent the next few months going back and forth about what she was feeling, all while

she was mentally going down a bad road. She reached a terrible crossroad with her anxiety, and she stopped looking forward to the future and would have rather die versus suffering every day. This mentally broke me into a million pieces, but I have had to stay strong and strongly convinced her and helped her seek help. We found a wonderful nurse practitioner who believed everything she said and didn't make her feel like she was crazy. She helped us formulate a treatment plan with Zoloft and therapy, and only since then the light at the end of the tunnel has gotten brighter and brighter as she is regaining more control over her anxiety every day.

I have a lot of mix feelings about this course, but I am eager to learn and have a deeper understanding of mental illness and the treatments available. I am uncertain how I will be able to deal with some of the psychiatric illness, but I am very empathetic, and I am going to try my hardest to learn and understand what these people may be going through and strive to ensure I can help curate a comfortable and safe environment during clinicals. I don't believe I have any other fears or concerns, I certainly do not have any triggers that could potentially create a problem, but if any concern or fear does become present, I am very good with coping and ensuring that the situation is handled in a very appropriate and safe manner. I think I have created a very healthy relationship with my responses to mental health crisis, I can understand that there is a physiological problem going on that can be creating a false and frightening mindset for people.

My expectations for this module are for me to be able to understand and identify how to respond to people who are struggling with their mental health. I want to develop a deeper understanding of how the mind and body are connected, because it baffles me that psychological issues can

create debilitating physical symptoms. My biggest three questions would revolve around anxiety, because I still have a lot of unanswered questions that would help me heal.

1. Is anxiety rooted within childhood trauma? Does the brain not understand why things happened and it can use anxiety and health anxiety as a form of closure, because it can get instant answers through the internet regarding symptoms?
2. Why does anxiety push people over the edge and deplete their self-worth and push them to the extremes of rather being dead than to fight.
3. Does anxiety and depression go hand in hand all the time?