

**Journal Assignment**

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IM6

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Discussing mental health disorders has become difficult for me over the years. Not because I cannot but because growing up it was always ingrained in my head by family members that struggling with mental health was an issue you kept to yourself and the way you “cured” it was by simply ignoring it and moving on with life.

The one person who truly influenced me to think speaking about mental health was wrong was my mother. I was raised in a very Mexican macho man household where speaking of things like depression or anxiety was believed to be a sign of weakness. My mother would criticize me any time I had any negative emotions. There were many times when I would come to her to discuss my feelings of depression and anxiety and I would be slapped with her saying things like “It is all in your head, you just need to get over it.” Or “You are a man, and men do not cry.” So, because of these things, I always believed that as a male I should never show my emotions because it would be a sign of weakness.

Thankfully as I grew older, I began to meet people who broke down the negative stigmatism of mental health and showed me that everyone has moments where they aren’t in the best headspace, they reassured me that it was a normal part of life and that there was nothing wrong with displaying these emotions and asking for help in my moments of weakness. However, trying to change this mentality was difficult at first because I could not come to terms that expressing my mental well-being aloud was okay.

Once I got over that curve, I truly began to feel a huge weight off my shoulders. I began to cope with my emotions in healthy ways like journaling and seeking therapy. As predicted when my family found out it was just endless judgment. Constant criticism where they made me seem crazy and puny for not being able to just snap out of my

depressive and anxiety episodes. Luckily, I stayed strong and continued to work on myself by putting my headspace and emotions first along with being able to cope with them in healthier ways. My life was truly saved by the people who showed me that it is okay to feel, and okay to ask for help when you feel like you are drowning

For those reasons, I believe my experience with psychiatric illness was rocky and not well managed at first but because of therapy and my experience has made a complete turnaround. I now see the importance of taking care of your mental health. There is a direct link between mental and physical wellbeing that I was neglecting and it showed. My life is now more positive, and I can better control my anxiety by better dealing with stress in my day-to-day life.

My fears or concerns with exploring this new material are just reminiscing on all the past traumas I went through. It is something I'm still working on years later, and it has been a long journey. I am not easily triggered by hearing people's issues. However, seeing someone who has experienced the same toxicity as I, triggers something in me because I want to be the help I received growing up to someone who does not know how to properly cope with their emotions due to macho male gender stereotypes in the Hispanic and Latino cultures.

Three things I hope to learn in this module are ways to better help someone in need of advice or guidance on how to improve their relationships with mental health. Along with being informed on different resources where they can find such help. Lastly, I hope to learn more ways I can continue to take care of my mental health.

In conclusion, my relationship and experience have not always been the prettiest. But it is a continuous journey from which I learn and grow on a day-to-day basis. I am truly excited to learn more about topics like anxiety, depression, and other mental health illnesses that affect many people and how they can alter their activities of daily living.