

Journaling Assignment

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Module 6: Current Theories and Practice

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As we enter into psychiatric mental health in our nursing program, I am ready to learn about this course as it is fascinating to me and important in providing holistic patient care. I, myself, along with most of my family and friends have dealt with some sort of mental illness. It is something I have definitely wanted to explore deeper to understand the chemical imbalances that occur in our brain. Mental health is an interesting topic because of the belief that it could be something “made up” or subjective to the person experiencing it. However, through research and our education we know that is simply not true. I like the phrase, “mental health *is* physical health” because it emphasizes its significance to our overall well-being.

My personal experience with psychiatric illness stemmed from the infamous year of 2020. For a lot of people, quarantine was a positive experience where we all got to stay home and allow some time for personal growth. However, for me it was the complete opposite. During that year I realized I thrive off of social experiences, leaving my house and having an independent routine. I was a senior in high school at the time which was already difficult on its own because I did not get to attend senior prom, graduation, along with multiple events we had planned for the spring semester. That alone was a hard time to cope with the fact that I was not going to be able to do the things I looked forward to since I was a freshman. At this time too, I had an unhealthy relationship with my mom and my family in general. Being stuck with each other in the house all day, every day put a heavy strain on our relationships. We had issues with communication, forgiveness and respect. Before this time, I already had symptoms of depression and anxiety but it definitely peaked during quarantine. I remember I used to attend therapy sessions when I was in the third grade for problems due to my behavior. It is not something my parents and I talk about anymore so I can't really explain why I used to go. My mom and sister both suffer from depression and anxiety so it wasn't a shock to me when I went to the doctor as

an adult and was diagnosed with these illnesses. I was prescribed Zoloft and took counseling classes once a week for about six months. In my experience, I felt like the counseling sessions helped me much more than the medication did. I had multiple adverse effects and was not good about taking it every day after experiencing those effects. The counseling sessions helped me to think in a different manner about recurrent situations I was in. My therapist helped me set boundaries with friends and understand that some things are simply out of my control. After a couple months I started to feel better so I stopped going to the counseling sessions. I regret that I abruptly stopped going to the sessions because there are times I feel like talking to someone with an unbiased, professional opinion who can help me process my emotions. Given the opportunity, I would definitely decide to go back and regularly attend sessions.

I would like to say my curiosity overpowers my fears and concerns throughout most learning in this course. The only subject I could see myself becoming uncomfortable with is learning about borderline personality disorder. My sister has been diagnosed with this disorder and it has caused a strain on her relationship with our family to where we no longer speak with each other. However, I do want to learn more about the disorder, so that next time we do speak to each other I could have a better understanding of her thinking and educate our family about the illness. It is something my mom and I have had multiple conversations over and have cried over several times that at this point we truly just want to understand and help her.

When I think about going to a mental hospital, my mind can't help but think of the movie *Girl, Interrupted*. It is supposedly based on the memoir of a young girl who was admitted to a mental hospital and describes her experience in the institution. Of course, I know movies are dramatized, but I expect my experience to be somewhat like that. I hope to have a better understanding of how I could personally help someone with a psychiatric disorder. My three

questions are: Could all mental illness be helped without the use of medications? What was the precipitating factor that led mental illness to be considered a part of physical health? What are some ways family members/friends can help their loved ones suffering from mental illness on a day to day basis?