

**1. Describe your feelings about your participation in the simulations this week.**

- I was not sure what to expect going into simulations this week because, not only were we going to be in an unfamiliar environment, but we were also going to be doing something we have not had the chance to do before. Working with mentally unstable patients is something I have not had the chance to do before, even during clinical's on other floors. The only mental illnesses I had ever seen with patients is depression and anxiety, which are common. I was excited, too, though because I was looking forward to getting more knowledge on the new mental illnesses we previously went over in class.

**2. How did it go compared to what you expected it to be like?**

- All the simulations went extremely well. It was nothing like I was expecting, which I was happy about. I was glad to see that we were not going to be working with dummies, and instead, each other. It gave the mental illnesses a new life-like feel and made the simulations feel more real. It was also a vastly different approach to how our simulations usually go. By taking out the regular, medical approach, of things, it gave us a chance to really focus on the therapeutic communication side of it, which was extremely helpful because, to me, that is the most important part taking care of mental illness patients.

**3. What went well?**

- There were quite a few things that went well during simulations this week. For one, having the chance to view medications before going into simulations was helpful because it gave us a chance to familiarize ourselves with what the patients might be prescribed. Also, having the pre-reads was helpful and very educational. It gave me chance to see what exactly goes into taking care of mentally ill patients and all the safety precautions that are in place for their safety. For my simulation, the best thing I did as the main nurse, was my therapeutic communication skills. Being able to talk to a patient calmly and really try and get them to understand you are only there to help them, is a particularly important aspect, and I was so glad to hear from my peers that that was something they thought I did well with.

**4. What could have gone better?**

- The main thing that I think could have better during this week's simulations was my participation as secondary nurse in Brianna's simulation. I felt like I should have done more as far as communicating with the patient when Brianna was busy talking to the physician and getting the medications ready. I felt that, because I was not particularly comfortable with the diagnosis that that patient had (schizophrenia), that I did not really know how to communicate with them. I also wanted to make sure I was not stepping on Brianna's toes, as she was the primary nurse for that case.

**5. Reflect on the scenario in which you were in the role of the patient or family member. How did that experience affect you?**

- For the simulation scenario in which I was the patient, I played the role of someone going through alcohol withdrawal. This role did not really affect my personal life as much as I thought it would. The only reason being, all the alcoholics I have in my family, I have not ever seen one of them have to go through withdrawal. It did give me an added insight into what their withdrawals might have looked like and what they might have been feeling during that time. It also gave me newfound empathy for patients that do come in for treatment of this diagnosis.

**6. How did this week impact the way you feel about your ability to use therapeutic communication?**

- This week changed the way I feel about using my therapeutic communication skills, in that, it added to my level of confidence that I already had while talking to patients. For mentally ill patients, most of the care they receive is centered around communication. If they do not feel comfortable talking to you or if they feel like you do not really care about them, they are not going to open up as much or want to talk to you about what they are truly going through.

**7. Did this week change the way you think about mental health? If so, how?**

- This week did not profoundly change the way I view mental health, but instead, opened my eyes more to the issues that some people face. I have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety, so I feel, going into this week, I had a leg up on everyone else because I have been on the other side of the room, as the patient, going through some of these same issues. It was an unfamiliar perspective for me though, as it gave me the chance to step into the nurse's shoes and care for someone battling these things instead of being the one cared for, which I am grateful for.

**8. How will you use the knowledge gained from this experience in your practice as a registered nurse?**

- I will now be able to use these experiences gained from this week's simulation as a registered nurse by feeling more comfortable and confident in my abilities to care for mentally ill patients. I will not feel as unexposed and new to caring for these patients. It also gave me the added realization that, just because these patients are going through these insanely rough battles, they are still people and deserve to be treated as such. That is the biggest takeaway for me for this week's simulations and I want to thank Dr. Harrison for gifting me with this experience.