

Jasmine Abalos

## PMH Simulation Reflection

Please reflect on your experiences in simulation this week and reply to each item below. You may add anything else you wish. Submissions should be a **minimum** of 350 words total.

- Describe your feelings about your participation in the simulations this week.

I really enjoyed the simulation experiences this week. Acting out these scenarios can make me feel nervous and awkward, but I am always grateful for the learning experience! Being able to watch what other groups would do and acting them out myself helps me prepare for experiences in my future nursing career. Having the opportunity to reflect on what we did right and wrong afterwards also really helps.

- How did it go compared to what you expected it to be like?

Since these simulations were with psychiatric/mental health patients, the skills were focused more on communication. In previous modules, I was used to simulations being geared towards clinical skills, so this was definitely a different experience. Communication has always been something that I have needed to work on, so I am glad I was able to practice this.

- What went well?

I had a PTSD patient who was very anxious and startled, so I thought I did okay in regards to calming her down. She had difficulty concentrating due to fear and agitation, but I was patient and willing to listen to her concerns. I assured her that we were there to help and keep her safe. Even though these patients can be standoffish and scared, consistent assurance and offering coping mechanisms helped me gain her trust.

- What could have gone better?

Since I am not used to dealing with this group of patients, I did overlook some of her needs. In most of the simulations I have been in, the patients were more vocal about what they wanted. However, in this scenario, I had to approach my patient differently due to her past. Even though my patient was very anxious, I did not think to get her medications to help with that. Since I was more focused on the medications already on her MAR, I did not realize that I could ask the doctor for a prescription that could help her. As nurses, since we are the ones spending most time with our patients, it is important to advocate for them and their needs. Making that suggestion to the doctor would have helped her feel better, which is overall what we want for our patients at the end of the day.

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

I played the role as a patient with anxiety, and since we have all felt anxious at some point, I was able to apply some of my own experiences to that scenario. It helped me put myself in the patient's shoes and better understand that that is how some people live every day. It was also nice to see how my classmates would act in that scenario. I thought they did really well teaching me coping mechanisms, so I would definitely use that later in my career.

- How this week impact the way you feel about your ability to use therapeutic communication?

Since communication has always been something that I have needed to work on, I think this experience has shown me that I know more than I think, but practice always helps! Even though I have a plan before going into a simulation, things tend to work out differently than expected (which is how it is in real life)! So, even though some things were unexpected, I was able to use past experiences and knowledge to try and comfort the patient the best I could.

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

I know mental health is very important and can affect many people's daily lives, but these simulations helped put it more in perspective. Since most people are already scared to be in a hospital as is, when suffering with mental illness, it can make it harder on that person and the nurse trying to take care of them. Regardless, everyone deserves to be adequately cared for, but I can see how they may be overlooked in real life. Even though there are stigmas on mental illness, it is important to not define or treat a person solely based on their diagnosis, but instead be open to different approaches.

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

I learned about the importance of therapeutic communication and how we can use it in our everyday life and nursing career. We use communication every day, but it is not just about talking to people, but also listening to them. In this experience, several of these patients were scared and standoffish, so sometimes all we can do as nurses is provide them comfort and listen. So overall, from these simulations I have learned the importance of communication, listening, providing coping mechanisms, and comforting patients.