

## 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. (135)

- Describe your feelings about your participation in the simulations this week.
- How did it go compared to what you expected it to be like?
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- Reflect on the scenario in which you were in the role of the patient or family member. How did that experience affect you?
- How did this week impact the way you feel about your ability to use therapeutic communication?
- Did this week change the way you think about mental health? If so, how?
- How will you use the knowledge gained from this experience in your practice as a registered nurse?

The simulation this week definitely helped improve my therapeutic communication skills. It taught me to slow down and think about what I am going to say before speaking. The simulation provided good opportunities to prepare us for the clinical setting and speaking to psychiatric patients. I do wish that this topic was covered in an earlier module as it would have been beneficial for other clinical settings. Overall, I have positive feelings towards this simulation and think it is an excellent opportunity to practice therapeutic communication.

I thought the scenario would go smoothly walking in. However, it is much more difficult to train your brain to not ask “why” questions. In preparing for the scenario, it always feels like it is going to go well and you know exactly what to say and do. Though, going into the room or watching a scenario play out, that is not the case. While I did not perform to my expectation, I do think I handled the scenario well for being out of my comfort zone.

In the scenario, I believe that we tried to continue communicating with the patient as best we could. Our patient did not have much to say and would give one-word replies, making it difficult to communicate. I think it went well in the sense that we didn't leave the patient and tried to continue the conversation. I wish that the conversation would have flown better without any awkward silences. It is kind of difficult to prepare or think of what to say to certain responses. I also wish I would have caught on to the nicotine addiction faster as well. It was not until we were in the middle of the CIWA assessment that I realized we could offer a nicotine patch after the patient repeatedly stated how bad he wanted one. It could have been possible for me to go call the doctor while the other nurse continued the CIWA assessment to help the cravings dissipate sooner.

Although I did not play the role as a patient, I can only imagine the struggle my peers had to take on in that role. With what little exposure we have to mental health disorders, we only see a small sliver of what their day-to-day life is like through these scenarios. It would be hard to fathom sitting in a hospital room and not being able to tell what's real or a hallucination. I can only imagine it being difficult to put into words their feelings and what their brain is thinking. I can also imagine it being difficult to open up to providers in fear of being judged or told that my truth isn't real. With anxiety, it is so difficult for patients to put into words what their body feels like and I can see how it can be frustrating when providers don't understand them. Playing the role as a schizophrenic for 20 minutes is a lot different than having to manage that disease every day. It is a struggle to be fearful of a hallucination inside a controlled environment and I cannot begin to imagine what that must be like out in the community.

I have always struggled with communicating with psychiatric patients. I never knew the right words to say or appropriate questions to ask. After this week, I feel like I have a good grasp on using therapeutic communication. I know it will take time and practice to develop strong communication skills, however I think I have a good base to start with. This week definitely made me realize how challenging it is to change the way questions are asked to not come across as rude or judgmental.

This week did change how I feel about mental health. It made me realize that we have to be careful in the things we say to people and that it is okay to just sit in silence with them sometimes. I used to have a slightly negative view towards mental health because I didn't know how to talk to them. I didn't know what I could do to help that person feel better. After this week, I realized that there is more to helping psychiatric patients than just speaking to them. This simulation has taught me new skills to use in my practice as a nurse. I know now that I can just sit with a patient and color with them or solve a puzzle. I can ask them about their music and what helps them relax. I will be able to sit with a patient and ask them what I can do to help them rather than trying to guess or avoid them. I will use the new forms of questions taught to get the patient to open up more to me and hopefully not have short answers. This week has taught me new ways to get more out of the patient by showing empathy.