

## Mental Health First Aid Clinical Journal

The clinical journal is a reflective assignment after completion of the Mental Health First Aid Course. This journal is designed to help you explore what you have learned, and what you may apply as a nurse caring for these types of patients. Please address each of the following points with 3-5 sentences. You are not limited to discussing only these points and may write more if you wish. This is not a formal paper and does not have to be in APA format.

1. How does the Mental Health First Aid Class relate to this course?

It talked about how to assess a situation, deescalate, and also keep yourself safe. It taught about the ABC's of the medical field compared to the mental health being ALGEE and not being in order. A for always constantly assessing and this is never ending. L for listening without judgement. G for giving reassurance. E for encouraging to seek professional help/treatment. E for encouraging to find thinks to help self and a person to trust to talk to. The class today, related greatly to the course and was good to learn this before going into clinicals.

2. Name 2 new things you learned in the Mental Health First Aid Class and how you could apply these skills in nursing practice.

I learned how to be direct and ask if a person has had thoughts of suicide or killing themselves. If you ask someone if they plan on ending their life, they could say no and be thinking about how their life could just be beginning. I will have to be asking the skills many times in nursing practice. I also learned that a panic attack and heart attack have the same signs and symptoms and to ask a person if they know what is happening to them. How to not say is it a panic or heart attack because they can just agree and have never had an experience to know. Also, to call 911, and how its easier to tell the ambulance to turn around than hurry up and how to ask if they need help in a panic attack but not force help.

3. Explore your self-awareness about mental health after completing the Mental Health First Aid Course. Did it change?

It changed dramatically, I considered myself pretty self-aware before this course but didn't recognize some of the things I say that fall into the stigma of mental health. A good example the instructor used was when a person has a mental illness people say, "they are bipolar" but if a person has cancer we don't say "they are cancer" we say "they have cancer". Bipolar, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia is a diagnosis just like others, they aren't what a person is, but something they have and have been diagnosed with.

4. How will you use the knowledge gained in this course to advocate for clients with mental health conditions?

I will use this knowledge to advocate for my clients with mental health conditions and society's stigma against mental health. I believe mental health needs more awareness. Another thing the instructor said that really stuck with me was how sometimes the brain doesn't produce enough chemicals we need, and we have to give them psychotropic medications to have the brain, an organ does its job correctly. Just like a diabetes patient with insulin but we don't call them psycho or have a stigma against them or any other negative knowledge or information relating to that diagnosis. I will be able to advocate for my clients when they are in need, and know how to react and destress a situation and provide open body language and therapeutic communication. I will also know to use the I's, like "I have noticed" instead of the "you" because that can be defensive, and clients will listen without becoming defensive.

5. Reflect on the overall experience after attending the Mental Health First Aid Course.

I think the overall experience was wonderful and learned many new things and different ways to look at certain situations. We did an activity trying to talk and have a conversation with someone while someone else was talking in an ear saying things a person with schizophrenia might hear and how hard it was to focus and not become frustrated. I don't understand how mental health can be pushed under the rug by society and not be funded or thought to be serious and just have no such little resources with long wait times to be in facilities, definitely an eye opener. The only downfall of the experience would be that after lunch there were times that it was seeming to be a really long time. With activities to stop and get up and move around it is helpful but it is a long time to basically sit and listen to a lecture. It was a great experience, and I would and will recommend to others and I have interest in taking the child course.

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1/20/23