

Mental Health First Aid Clinical Journal

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

The Mental Health First Aid Class relates to this course because both deal with patients or people in society who might suffer from a mental illness. The class does not give us the right to diagnose a person but to better handle a situation involving someone with a mental health condition. The class also discussed how to better handle situations where an individual might be involved with substance use and abuse. This course also discusses how substance use plays a role in mental health.

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

The class gave us firsthand experience communicating better with individuals with mental health issues. I believe learning newer and more effective ways of communicating with individuals who suffer from mental illness is one thing I learned from the class. I could apply and use these skills during clinical or when I become a nurse; if someone has a manic episode, I believe I will feel a little more equipped to handle the situation. The second thing I learned from the class is how it feels to have auditory hallucinations. The whole group did this exercise where it seemed like you were hearing another voice in your head that wasn't yours. I never understood what that felt like, but now I have an idea, even if it wasn't real. Since going through that, I think I will be able to understand and empathize with the individual more easily. I believe I will be able to use and apply that in clinical or once I become a nurse if one of my patients is experiencing any kind of hallucination.

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

I knew a chemical imbalance in the brain causes many mental health issues. Even before the class, I knew the chemical imbalance was not the person's fault. However, I did and still do feel bad for those individuals with mental health issues just because some people believe that the person is choosing to feel or act that way, not because of the mental illness. Those people think the illness can be flipped on or off like a light switch, which isn't the case. One thing I wasn't aware of before completing the Mental Health First Aid Course was that when someone is suffering from depression, depression can cause legitimate physical pain. This class changed my

self-awareness of depression and how it can cause patients physical pain. I'm not saying I didn't think they felt pain, I just wasn't aware of the physical pain they endure, so it changed my self-awareness in that aspect.

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

The knowledge I gained from this class will be valuable in my nursing career and everyday society. Especially out in society, this course might be of more use. If I come across someone in society whom I know and who appears to be having a manic episode, I will know how to effectively communicate with them and get them the help they need, even if they don't want help in the beginning. As an advocate, it's my job to see that they get the help they need and to make sure no harm comes to them by leaving them alone. As a nurse for my clients, though, I believe I could apply the knowledge learned in the course to talk to clients more effectively. I can use effective communication to find out the client's true wishes, set realistic goals, and advocate for the client when the provider isn't listening to their wishes.

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

I enjoyed all the exercises we did to understand more about the different types of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and auditory/visual hallucinations. The videos that were provided during the class were very informative, too. I loved hearing from the person who suffers from that specific mental illness, their personal experience with it, and the signs and symptoms they experienced. I believe I benefitted from that course and enjoyed the instructors who put it on.

