

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?
 - a. I believe that the Mental Health First Aid Class was extremely relevant to this course. I think it was a great introduction to important mental health topics such as anxiety, depression, and suicide. It also related well to this course in that it taught a lot about how to go about having conversations surrounding mental health. The presenters of the course made a great point that even though all of us may not go into “mental health nursing”, many of our future patients will have mental health diagnoses so it is important to understand how to effectively help such individuals.
2. Name 2 new things you learned in the Mental Health First Aid Class and how you could apply these skills in nursing practice.
 - a. One thing I learned in the Mental Health First Aid Class is that when discussing mental health problems, you should be up-front and straight forward when asking people if they are thinking about something such as suicide. We talked a lot about having the confidence to just simply ask those questions and that is something I will certainly carry over into my nursing practice. A second thing that I learned from the class was how many people actually do have a mental health diagnosis; it was more than I thought. Now, as I go on to become a nurse, those statistics will be something I keep in the back of my mind and I will try to not only help patients with their physical ailments, but also try to be extra aware of any mental ailments that they may be struggling with and help them with those too.
3. Explore your self-awareness about mental health after completing the Mental Health First Aid Course. Did it change?
 - a. Before completing this course, mental health was a topic that I was nervous about because I really just had no idea how to approach the topic with other people. I was under the misconception that if I brought up the topic of depression or suicide with someone then it might increase those thoughts for that person. However, I know have a much better understanding that it is important to openly discuss topics such as depression and suicide and that it truly helps individuals when they are asked and given the chance to talk about what they are feeling.

4. How will you use the knowledge gained on this course to advocate for clients with mental health conditions?
 - a. I think this class did a really good job of pointing out the biases that a lot of people have about mental health. For example, we talked a lot about how people often treat individuals with mental illnesses differently than those with physical illnesses. I think this was an inherent bias that I didn't really realize that I had, but now I will make a much more conscious effort to advocate for patients with mental illnesses just as much as I will for patients with physical illnesses. I think it is also important to speak up when you hear others engage in negative talk about people with mental illnesses so I really want to be brave and make sure I say something when I hear others speaking poorly about people with mental health struggles. Also, I feel like I learned how to better approach conversations about mental health so I hope that I can make my patients feel comfortable, heard, and not stigmatized.

5. Reflect on the overall experience after attending the Mental Health First Aid Course.
 - a. I really enjoyed this Mental Health First Aid Course. I feel like growing up that mental health has been a topic that gets brushed aside and made to feel like something we shouldn't talk about, but after this course I really see the importance in being more open about this topic. I really enjoyed the example Mr. Jim used when he talked about how we don't blame a person with diabetes for the chemical imbalance of their pancreas, so why do we tend to blame people with mental illnesses for the imbalances of their brain? It really helped me see the topic of mental illness from a different perspective and I will certainly carry this with me into my nursing career.

