

REVIEWS

Nancy Phelan Walsh, RN, MSN
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BOOKS

Law and Ethics for Clinicians. *Jacquelyn Kay Hall. Amarillo, TX: Jackhal Books, 2001, 394 pages, \$34.95.*

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Law and Ethics for Clinicians focuses on ways that clinicians can practice to avoid lawsuits. The book is not about law per se but is more about the theories and ethics of law. This easy-to-read text suggests that practicing good patient care is a “shortcut past the courthouse.”

Common ethical issues in relation to the law, how laws are made, and how ethics affect decision making are discussed. In my experience, few scholarly works simultaneously detail truths, values, and the laws that reflect those values with as much overall simplicity as this text manages; *Law and Ethics* is a wealth of information. After each section, “think-about-it” questions are featured to relate the previous information to current, everyday practice. The book is not intended to be read from cover to cover but, instead, as topics are needed. This book is suitable for a wide range of healthcare practitioners who have direct patient contact and is not specific to any specialty.

Law and Ethics provides a review of ethics and law and their relationship to practice. Ethical theories and decision making are discussed in a clear and concise manner. Each chapter contains key concepts, think-about-it questions, and references. The book is intended to change clinicians’ fear of law by educating about ethical and lawful practice. All major legal and ethical issues that healthcare providers encounter are discussed at length, such as do-not-resuscitate requests, living wills, malpractice, assisted suicide, the labor law, and licensure.

Very few tables or illustrations are included in the text, and those that are have no headings or titles. This is distracting because read-

ers must refer to the body of the text to determine what information the table or illustration is relaying. Despite this minimal shortcoming, *Law and Ethics* is an outstanding and timely book. Although most of its information can be found in law or ethics books, no other text contains as much information in a volume of this size. The information is up to date and describes situations that can occur on a daily basis. The author’s writing style is easy to read and interpret. This is an asset to healthcare literature and a great resource for all practicing healthcare providers.

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Bioethics From a Faith Perspective: Ethics in Health Care for the Twenty-First Century. *Jack Hanford. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2002, 150 pages, \$19.95.*

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Bioethics From a Faith Perspective: Ethics in Health Care for the Twenty-First Century is a concise volume that describes the relevance, significance, and guidance that a faith perspective can impart to the field of bioethics.

The author is a pastor as well as a professor emeritus of biomedical ethics. In an admirably lengthy way, Hanford tackles the controversial religious dimension of bioethics. The faith perspective known best to the author is the Christian perspective; he offers a distinct Christian therapeutic perspective regarding the role that faith should play in bioethics. Although highly difficult to understand, this volume explains bioethics-related issues, making it a valuable contribution to the literature of faith and bioethics research and theory.

This thoughtful and dogmatic volume is comprised of 12 chapters and a multitude of references, which may be appealing espe-

cially to research-minded readers. Generally, the author states what he perceives to be the traditional divorcing of medical ethics from religion. A plethora of bioethics-related questions is examined from a faith perspective encompassing, for instance, managed care, organ donation, the Human Genome Project, mental health, medical technology, alternative medicine, physician-assisted suicide, and issues particularly impacting the elderly. *Bioethics* raises a great variety of questions for further research consideration and makes a commendable effort in demystifying the complexity and inscrutability of faith. Readers’ attention is drawn sharply to the potentially important role that faith perspectives can play in bioethics and healthcare decision making.

One chapter focuses on bioethics for nurses from a faith perspective. The author reveals a great deal of empathy for nurses and the tough professional challenges they face. This intellectually provocative book may be intriguing to nurses grappling with bioethics issues and instructive to nurses weighing whether to adopt a faith perspective when addressing bioethics matters.

Many faith traditions exist in the world. The faith and bioethics relationship may be better approached with a multiauthored volume that reflects on the disparate, wide-ranging views of ethicists, philosophers, and scholars attached to different religions.

Although the volume is written in a way that is probably too esoteric for many laypeople, *Bioethics* should be invaluable for nurses and other healthcare professionals.

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Standing Ovation: Performing Social Science Research About Cancer. *Ross Gray, Christina Sinding. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002, 160 pages, \$34.95.*

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Standing Ovation: Performing Social Science Research About Cancer explores the question, “Is the use of a theatrical performance an effective way to communicate the results of social science research to healthcare providers and the public?” The authors, a social scientist and a psychosocial and

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Ease of Reference and Usability

🕒 Quick, on-the-spot resource

√ Basic

🕒🕒 Moderate time requirement

√√ Intermediate

🕒🕒🕒 In-depth study

√√√ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required

Content Level

Book Size

📖 Pocket size

📖📖 Intermediate

📖📖📖 Desk reference

behavioral health administrator, describe the process of blending the experience of living with cancer and the dissemination of their findings through a live theater audience.

Consisting of 10 chapters, the text outlines the authors' and cast's experience with examining and portraying the meaning of living with metastatic breast cancer and combining social science research with theater. The actual theatrical performance titled "Handle With Care: Living With Metastatic Breast Cancer" was created and performed by a research team, a theater troupe, and women living with the disease. The title reflects common responses to people living with cancer. Sometimes, patients with cancer are handled with care as if they are vulnerable, fragile, and in need of protection. The title, in part, captures the cast's experience in dealing with uncertainty as they learned about cancer then assumed their roles throughout all phases of the production. The cast members recall their experience with the theatrical production, becoming immersed in their work, and eventually approaching the subject of living with cancer head on. This sharply contrasts the title of the performance, which could imply that the participants were not close or personally engaged with the subject matter.

The authors used research findings from focus group discussions with women with metastatic breast cancer and interviews conducted with oncologists to help create the performance. Given the richness of the data, the authors capitalized on their interest in disseminating research findings to a larger audience by creating the theatrical performance. Cast members of the drama included members of the research team from Toronto-Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre, volunteers recruited from a theater and drama center, and two women living with advanced breast cancer. The inclusion of women living with the disease was essential and successful in capturing the meaning of living with breast cancer. Throughout all phases of the production, cast members were interviewed to explore their experiences related to the project (e.g., the meaning of illness, linking research to drama). Phenomenology, particularly techniques described by Van Maanen, was used to capture the meaning of living with breast cancer.

The authors are careful to create a vivid description of the cast members' involvement in the process and their emotional responses to being so closely aligned with the disease. The impact on the members is quite emotional at times, sometimes resulting in withdrawal. Throughout the production, the cast portrays a multitude of experiences that are encountered when living with the disease, including sorting out informational needs, establishing supportive relationships, and maintaining a balance between patient autonomy and provider involvement.

One portion of *Standing Ovation* is devoted to highlighting the cast's experience

with a second theatrical performance, "No Big Deal," a production focused on couples' experiences living with prostate cancer. Similar to the discussions of "Handle With Care," the authors describe the process of blending prostate cancer research findings with theater. Both productions were followed by discussions with the audience. Past performance discussions and written evaluations were very favorable and expressed the impact of combining drama, research, and humor to portray the lived experience related to metastatic breast cancer. Some healthcare providers acknowledged that their eyes had been opened to the issues of people living with cancer. Some members of the audience attributed the impact of "Handle With Care" to combining drama with comedy. The authors underscored the value of past performance discussions in informing and, in some instances, telling the story of living with cancer in another voice.

Overall, this easy-to-read book provides a well-constructed overview of the experience of transcribing field notes from focus groups into scripts for research-based theatrical performances. One of the text's major strengths is its inclusion of patients with cancer who helped clarify and intensify the true meaning of living with breast and prostate cancers. *Standing Ovation* also features a companion videotape that provides a visual depiction of the process of blending research with theater. The authors are careful to describe the challenges and triumphs associated with research-based theater. Although partially captured in the book, additional resources highlighting the art of blending research with theater may be of use to others interested in this approach. The authors answer "yes" to the question, "Is the use of a theatrical performance an effective way to communicate the results of social science research to healthcare providers and the public?"

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Other Books

Breast Cancers: Prognosis, Treatment, and Prevention. Jorge R. Pasqualini (Ed.). New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., 2002, 656 pages, hardcover, \$165.

This medically oriented text provides information about current therapeutic strategies for endocrine treatments, angiogenesis research, and nonhormonal approaches to predict, control, and inhibit the formation and growth of cancerous cells.

Fighting for Our Future. Beth Murphy. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002, 304 pages, hardcover, \$21.95.

Specifically tailored for young patients with breast cancer, this book offers much-needed information about issues concerning

this special population. Data were gathered through a medical advisory panel and from survivors from the Young Survival Coalition. Some of the topics included are body image, diet and exercise, reconstruction, fertility, and child rearing. A companion video is also available.

Knowing Stephanie. Photographs by Charlee Brodsky, words by Stephanie Byram, essay by Jennifer Matesa. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003, 144 pages, hardcover, \$32.

Knowing Stephanie is a memorable black-and-white photo journal that beautifully illustrates the inspiring life of a unique young woman who embraced an aggressive breast cancer that greatly shortened her life.

W E B S I T E



Name of site: Nursing Ethics Network (NEN)

URL: www.nursingethicsnetwork.org

Authorship: A nonprofit group is responsible for the site's content. A number of advanced practice nurses make up its editorial board that is chaired by Joan M. Riley, EdD, RN, from the Department of Nursing at Emmanuel College in Boston, MA.

Privacy statement: The statement is present, comprehensive, and easy to find.

Disclosure statement: The statement is present, comprehensive, and easy to find.

Content highlights: NEN is a nonprofit organization of professional nurses from various backgrounds committed to the advancement of nursing ethics in clinical practice. On this fast-loading and informative Web site, users will find a helpful list of Web links and resource materials. Its most unique feature is the NEN Online Inquiry Service in which nurses from the NEN Advisory Board volunteer their time and expertise to respond to ethical questions. At this time, questions can be posed about clinical and research situations. In our testing, the responses were focused and articulate and were received quickly. The site does not contain advertising.

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