

B O O K S

Issues and Strategies for Nurse Leaders: Meeting Hospital Challenges Today. *Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Oakbrook Terrace, IL: Joint Commission Resources, 2005, 167 pages, \$75.*

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Although not specifically oncology related, *Issues and Strategies for Nurse Leaders: Meeting Hospital Challenges Today* is a good resource for assisting nurse leaders or executives in successfully meeting challenges in today's fast-paced healthcare environment. Nurse managers and hospital administrators can and should use this book when initiating discussions about taking institutions from good to great. Although the book generally is a strong resource for what needs to be addressed in any healthcare organization, *Issues and Strategies* should not be used when more specific actions are desired because methods for putting the strategies into action are not readily outlined. This may be because each healthcare institution has its own set of issues, strengths, and weaknesses that will influence the implementation of any plan.

Chapter one gives an excellent example of how multidisciplinary care and open communication among disciplines should be developed. In addition, the chapter clearly defines roles that nurses should undertake. The "standards connection" on performance expectations for nurse executives translates the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) stan-

dards into easily understood responsibilities. Unfortunately, the text does not do the same for the role of frontline nurse manager.

Chapter two reviews in some detail the challenges that are related to the nursing shortage on a global scale. Issues surrounding nurses practicing in one country then moving to another are identified, and the problem of recruitment and retention is discussed. In the past, retaining nurses seems to have been overlooked. Today, however, nothing should be overlooked. Although retaining experienced nurses can be expensive compared to bringing in new graduates, the following issue is raised: When no new graduates can be brought in (i.e., nursing shortage), what is the alternative?

The remaining chapters offer possibilities for creating a work environment that will entice staff to stay. The text identifies staffing issues as the cause of many errors, including those related to medication. Sidebars explain the JCAHO standards and cite examples from some hospitals that have worked through identified problems; these are great descriptions of how to proceed correctly. However, in reality, financial and staffing constraints make these suggestions difficult to implement in any given hospital. For example, providing one day off each month for educational opportunities for each staff member or allocating five days per year away from the hospital setting with paid time off in addition to tuition expenses may create a financial strain that many hospitals cannot bear despite the importance of continuing education.

If some way existed to incorporate specific, detailed suggestions, including costs, to answer the JCAHO standards and issues of practice in today's healthcare environment, this book would be the bible of healthcare management. However, costs vary from area to area, making generalizing difficult at best, but *Issues and Strategies* is unique in that it discusses the hospital's need to be responsive to JCAHO standards as well as the needs of

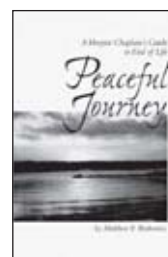
the hospital itself. Sidebars and tables are excellent in collating resource data to back up the text's topics.

Hospitals can use this text to initiate discussions regarding how to grow and develop continually in the face of current challenges. By incorporating the strategies outlined, hospital leaders can enhance their work environments and greatly improve patient and employee satisfaction. As well as augmenting the care given by nursing, all departments will benefit from applying the initiatives designed by the hospital workforce, which may lead to Magnet status from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. *Issues and Strategies* gives organizations a starting point. Hospital leaders will need to take on the responsibility of putting the strategies into play in ways that will work for their institutions.

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Peaceful Journey: A Hospice Chaplain's Guide to End of Life. *Matthew P. Binkewicz. Ithaca, NY: Paramount Market Publishing, 2005, 160 pages, \$19.95.*

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Peaceful Journey: A Hospice Chaplain's Guide to End of Life is written by a long-term hospice chaplain and ordained Russian Orthodox minister who uses clinical narratives to help patients and their caregivers cope with their fears and concerns related to any terminal illness. Nurse readers will benefit from 10 stories about the chaplain's response to spiritual questions raised by secular and religious patients. Insights for oncology nurses from this book are theologic, not specifically related to the end of life.

After two brief sections defining hospice and the chaplain's role, the author uses patient stories as a context to address issues of dementia, being alone, suffering, disability, family

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Ease of Reference and Usability	Content Level	Media Size
🕒 Quick, on-the-spot resource ✓ Basic	✓ Basic	👤 Pocket size
🕒🕒 Moderate time requirement ✓ ✓ Intermediate	✓ ✓ Intermediate	👤 👤 Intermediate
🕒🕒🕒 In-depth study ✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required	👤 👤 👤 Desk reference

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/05.ONF.1219-1221

communications, near-death experiences, and end-of-life nutrition and hydration in a matter-of-fact, compassionate manner. Each case illustrates what the author sees as a chaplain's role: (a) to be present with patients and (b) to be involved in other activities such as counseling, building supportive relationships, prayer, and giving the sacraments as appropriate to the individual. An appendix suggests Bible verses and supportive activities for addressing spiritual concerns from counseling and Orthodox perspectives. The book is not highly referenced and represents the author's own reflections on his experiences with individual patients and their end-of-life concerns.

Unique is the text's forthrightness about how the Orthodox tradition addresses patient questions about suffering, an afterlife, prayer, and God's relationship with humans. The book has a refreshingly honest quality that allows readers to agree or disagree knowledgeably. Patient stories make the book an easy and engaging read, although, on occasion, the length of the author's direct theological comments is surprising.

Limitations of the book relate to its layout and some conceptual confusion. First, navigating the book would be easier if page headings included chapter names. Second and more importantly, the author sometimes overstates or doesn't clarify a position so that he seems self-contradictory. For example, although the text consistently and compassionately treats all individuals as valuable, at one point, the text notes that "dementia robs the patient of . . . humanity" (p. 50).

Peaceful Journey is not a practical how-to guide but could help patients and caregivers to think about their own questions as they overhear others' concerns and a chaplain's responses.

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The Best News About Radiation Therapy: Everything You Need to Know About Your Treatment. Carol L. Kormmehl. New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 2004, 185 pages, \$14.95.

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The Best News About Radiation Therapy: Everything You Need to Know About Your Treatment is written for patients undergoing radiation therapy, and its goal is for patients to better understand the treatment experience, which it accomplishes. Family members and significant others also will benefit from reading this book because it gives enough detail that

readers will have the feeling of undergoing simulation and treatments, thereby aiding in understanding the patient experience. Medical terms are described throughout, and a glossary is included. Some unexplained nonmedical words in the first chapter are at a higher reading level than those in the remaining chapters of the book, but the majority of the content is easy to read. The text is written in the first person using the present tense.

The Best News About Radiation Therapy begins with radiation therapy basics and progresses to more complicated concepts. The text has a total of 10 chapters, with its introductory chapters detailing the concepts of radiation therapy, what happens when a patient meets with a radiation oncologist for the first time, and how radiation will affect a patient's life. Later chapters cover simulation in considerable detail and highlight body sections and how those areas are simulated. Information about immobilization and its importance, markings and tattoos, and how simulation is performed and its importance also is included. The remaining chapters discuss radiation therapy delivery to specific areas of the body, potential common and uncommon side effects, how to manage side effects, and how long-term side effects persist after the completion of therapy. One chapter discusses the completion of radiation therapy and follow-up care. The last chapter provides commonly asked questions and answers. Many patient examples and case studies appear throughout the text that greatly enhance understanding. Photos and illustrations are used liberally, making concepts easier to understand and visualize.

Limitations include the use of the word "burn" instead of radiation reaction and other more modern terminology for skin-related side effects and recommending the use of potentially irritating products (e.g., vinegar and water vaginal douches) for mucous membrane reactions. These limits do not interfere with the utility of this text for patients or its inclusion in a patient education library as long as nurses are involved in supplying these resources and pointing out the inaccuracies or deficits in each resource.

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V I D E O

Smoking Cessation: Improve Your Health. *Grand Rapids Community College (Producer).* Sherborn, MA: *Aquarius Health Care Videos*, 2003, 27 minutes, \$125.

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Scenes of older people enjoying a variety of recreational activities and an introduction



about smoking cessation within the context of successful aging identify the intended audience early in

this video. The implied purpose of *Smoking Cessation: Improve Your Health* is to inform older people about the harmful effects of smoking and to encourage those who smoke to quit. Quitting smoking is cited as the single most important step that smokers can take to improve their health and quality of life. A key message throughout the video is that even long-term smokers derive significant physical and psychological benefits from quitting and that smokers should never "quit quitting."

The narrator presents impressive statistics on morbidity and mortality attributed to smoking. This information is reinforced in scenes featuring two RNs who specialize in smoking cessation: a urologist who describes the smoking-related increased risk for bladder cancer and erectile dysfunction and a representative of the American Cancer Society. The narrator then introduces a series of old and very compelling television cigarette advertisements and film clips that effectively illustrate how people older than the age of 50 were bombarded with enticements to begin smoking. The nurses, a physician addiction consultant, and a psychologist address the ease of becoming addicted to nicotine and the difficulties in quitting smoking in a matter-of-fact yet sensitive manner. The physician relates the startling fact that, on average, a recovering smoker tries to quit six times before achieving success.

Two of many strengths of this video are its emphasis on a multifocal, multidisciplinary approach to smoking cessation and the repeated description of the benefits derived by smokers who quit. These benefits, accrued from 20 minutes to as many as 15 years after cessation, are displayed in tabular format as the narrator presents them. The mitigation of erectile dysfunction is mentioned as a potentially strong incentive for men to quit smoking. Another strength is the video's effective use of graphics to emphasize major points. For example, viewers are both told and shown where to seek help to quit smoking and are cautioned to avoid programs that offer quick and easy results, refuse to provide references, or charge high fees.

In regard to technical quality, the video is clearly audible, illustrations are readable, and film and television clips are incorporated effectively to emphasize key points. One minor limitation of the video is that at times the healthcare providers seem to speak directly to smokers, addressing them as "you," and at other times address a more general audience.

Smoking Cessation presents important and useful information that successfully conveys the message that smoking is a significant healthcare problem and that quitting smoking is not easy. However, help is avail-

able, and the benefits of quitting are well worth the effort.

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Worth a Look


It's My Future: Should I Be a Nurse Practitioner? Elaine Wick. Cherry Hill, NJ: National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, 2004, 64 pages, \$12.95.

It's My Future: Should I Be a Nurse Practitioner? would be a good introduction for

young readers interested in or thinking of becoming a nurse practitioner (NP). In the six chapters of this book, 11-year-old Nikki's journey is chronicled as she learns about herself and her future while she helps her younger brother, Sam, who has asthma.

Readers are introduced to Nikki when Sam is suffering from an asthma attack. At the health center, she encounters Connie, an NP. Connie is calm and friendly and immediately helps Sam. Nikki later asks her mother if she thinks she would be good at nursing. As a result, Connie begins to meet with and mentor Nikki to help her identify personal characteristics and how these will enhance her role as an NP. Through this type of story format, the author gives an

overview of the courses in a nursing curriculum; defines terms such as pediatric NP, master's degree, and certification; and provides an overview of the types of services that NPs provide. Nikki is allowed to sit in on several interactions that Connie has with her patients so that Nikki may learn more about the role.

It's My Future is easy to read and would be a good icebreaker when talking to students at a career day or preteens who may wonder what nurses do. This book may be helpful in dispelling some of the unrealistic portrayals of nurses in the media. The text also includes a glossary and a suggested reading list, as well as recommended Web sites. _____ 

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