

KNOWLEDGE CENTRAL

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B O O K S

Here for Now: Living Well With Cancer Through Mindfulness. *Elana Rosenbaum. Hardwick, MA: Satya House Publications, 2005, 200 pages, \$16.95. (An affiliated CD, Here for Now: Mindfulness Meditations, is 60 minutes long and available for \$17.95.)*

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Here for Now: Living Well With Cancer Through Mindfulness is a personal account and a self-help book that is filled with touching stories, practical and effective exercises, colorful images, and inspiring poems and affirmations—all which

enthus and instruct patients with cancer to live fully amidst the challenges and uncertainties of their disease. With authenticity, the author shares her journey with lymphoma and a stem cell transplant. Her experience is complemented by her insight as a talented psychotherapist and skill as a mindfulness meditation instructor who taught for 20 years in the renowned University of Massachusetts Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program.

At the heart of the book is the use of mindfulness as a tool for living well with cancer. What is mindfulness and how can it be helpful to patients with cancer? Mindfulness is the moment-by-moment awareness of sensations, emotions, and thoughts. It is about fully experiencing the present moment and not getting caught up in or clinging to past regrets, sad or happy memories, or worries about the future. Mindfulness encompasses the qualities of being nonjudgmental and gentle with oneself. Living with cancer or any serious, life-threatening illness is fraught with psychological unease from changes in body image and fear of recurrence or death, as well as physical symptoms, such as pain. Learning to be mindful means noticing and acknowledging thoughts and feelings but

not allowing the mind to fast-forward and jump to conclusions. For example, paying attention to the qualities of pain, such as throbbing, aching, or warmth, rather than its possible cause (e.g., cancer progressing), allows patients to notice that pain is not just one constant and dreaded entity. Instead, pain encompasses different sensations that change from one moment to the next. Recognizing this and not reacting with fear promote a sense of openness; consequently, tensions (e.g., mental, muscular) diminish.

Although the concepts of mindfulness are relatively simple, learning to be mindful is not easy and takes practice, patience, and guidance. At the end of each chapter, exercises are included so that readers can practice and learn the techniques.

The text's affiliated CD, *Here for Now: Mindfulness Meditations*, can be especially helpful. It has four guided mindfulness meditations (i.e., body scan, the sky, loving-kindness, and awareness of breathing) that range from 5–26 minutes in length. The book and CD are excellent resources that can be used together or separately.

One of the greatest strengths of the book is its practical how-to exercises that were designed by the author—an individual who has thrived despite devastating cancer treatments and recurrences and, even more compelling, who has enormous skill and credibility in the field of mindfulness. A limitation, however, is that the author's personal story can be distracting and detract from the focus of the book.

Here for Now is a valuable addition to the oncology lay literature. Although many self-help and personal account books are available for patients with cancer and even more books have been published about mindfulness, this book is unique because it is specifically about mindfulness and cancer. As research in the area of mindfulness for patients with cancer grows, so does the interest in using this behavioral intervention. Besides recommending the book and CD to patients, oncology nurses and other healthcare professionals can gain much from these resources. Countless pearls of wisdom are offered that will touch

you and enhance your clinical practice, even your own life.

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I'm a Superhero. *Daxton Wilde (and his mother, Sherry Wilde), illustrated by Daxton Wilde. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2005, 32 pages, \$9.95.*

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I'm a Superhero is a children's book that was written and illustrated by a four-year-old boy with a brain tumor (with the assistance of his mother). The book is intended to help other children bat-

tling cancer know what to expect and conveys the importance of a positive attitude.

Some of the treatments that are described are geared specifically to children with brain tumors. As a result, some of the information may not be applicable to children with other types of cancer. Adults who read the book to children with other types of cancer should make sure to discuss any similarities and differences in treatment, which may be a limitation. However, the information about receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatments is generalized. Some of the content could cause confusion or even frighten children. For example, graphic statements, such as "they put a tube in my nose and food goes through the tube to my tummy," may need additional explanation to help children understand procedures, which may be another limitation.

In addition to being humorous, Daxton Wilde's illustrations portray his experiences very well. The illustrations may help children understand what they will experience even more than the book's narrative. The uniqueness of the book is that it is a first-person (child's) account. *I'm a Superhero* is a prime example of how patients can help others by telling their stories and experiences. For professionals, the book can be a resource for teaching and encouraging pediatric patients with cancer.

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Ease of Reference and Usability

🕒 Quick, on-the-spot resource

🕒🕒 Moderate time requirement

🕒🕒🕒 In-depth study

Content Level

✓ Basic

✓ ✓ Intermediate

✓ ✓ ✓ Advanced and complex, prerequisite reading required

Media Size

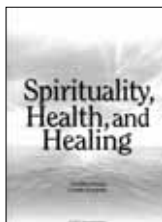
🧘 Pocket size

🧘🧘 Intermediate

🧘🧘🧘 Desk reference

Spirituality, Health, and Healing. *Caroline Young and Cyndie Koopsen. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2005, 247 pages, \$38.95.*

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Spirituality, Health, and Healing is an excellent resource for a wide variety of healthcare providers, from students to experienced professionals. The book targets and is appropriate for professional disciplines, including but not limited to medicine, nursing, pastoral care, and social work. Holistic care (i.e., care of mind, body and spirit, and relief of patients' "dis-ease") is paramount throughout the publication.

Organized into four parts, the book takes readers from the basic definition of spirituality through spirituality at the end of life and for special populations. Each chapter contains learning objectives, content, a summary, key concepts, and questions for reflection. Concisely written and packed with information, *Spirituality, Health, and Healing*, along with an available instruction manual, is a classroom tool worthy of any institution.

Part I deals with the groundwork of spirituality. Spirituality is defined, and the connections between healing and spirituality and the spiritual interaction between patients and healthcare professionals are highlighted. This section of the text explores the practice of rituals, which are vital to patients, who obtain comfort through prayer, meditation, guided imagery, art, and storytelling, among others. Spirituality is not religiosity; however, the two are interconnected. Religious beliefs and practices are explained, and the importance of culture and cultural issues is examined as it is related to healing.

In Part II, the authors discuss the provision of spiritual care. To provide spiritual care, the "five R's" are recommended as a guide to beneficial spiritual care, leading to assessment, diagnosis, and a plan. Spiritually healing environments play an important role in the relief of spiritual dis-ease. What surrounds a patient enhances his or her well-being. Temperature, lighting, noise, color, nature, etc., all contribute to the healing process. However, to offer successful spiritual care, providers first must care for themselves by performing spiritual self-assessment and developing their own spiritual care plans. Then, they can be truly effective as spiritual caregivers.

Part III describes the spiritual dimension of end-of-life care when the needs of dying patients change and other issues arise. Hospice, palliative care, and religious and cultural rituals and practices at the end of life need to be addressed. Once a patient's journey is over, the grieving process begins for family and friends. Their needs are addressed with a well-written chapter that describes the griev-

ing process, including the types of responses from patients' loved ones, the spiritual dimension of their grief, and cultural diversities in the grief process. The importance of grief counseling is stressed.

Part IV addresses spirituality and children as well as spirituality and aging. The authors discuss the spiritual development of children from infancy through adolescence. Each phase has its own special assessment and plan of care.

The book ends with an in-depth chapter on aging. Older adults have unique spiritual needs. They deal not only with illness but a complete change in lifestyle. Their autonomy is challenged, they may have to leave their homes for assisted living, their friends are deteriorating or dying, and they must depend on others. Coping strategies are addressed, end-of-life care is discussed, meaning and purpose of their remaining years are reviewed, and interventions to deal with these situations are explained. Readers will benefit greatly from this timely publication.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Strength 4 Your Journey: Taking Control of Cancer. *Bridgewater, NJ: Ortho Biotech Products, L.P., 2005. The complete program is available free online at www.strength4yourjourney.com/index.jsp.*

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Strengthen 4 Your Journey: Taking Control of Cancer is a unique contribution to the armamentarium available for patients dealing with

new cancer diagnoses and their caregivers. The program is divided into four main sections: basics of cancer, treatment, take control, and caregivers. Each section includes a list of detailed subtopics. The program requires some basic familiarity with computers, including the use of a mouse and the right-click function, which may pose some difficulty for individuals who are not particularly computer literate. Interspersed throughout the basic program are options to view brief video clips that provide information from survivors and members of the healthcare team. The video clips add to the presentation by giving it a more human touch and varying the visual stimuli.

The strengths of the program are numerous, including the wide breadth of information it encompasses. The inclusion of psychosocial information, such as insurance, work-related

concerns, sexuality, and taking care of the whole self, is an additional strength.

The program is weakened by the high level of readability. Many of the screens are very wordy and cumbersome. A grade-level readability calculation with some reworking of the text is advised. More diagrams and animation throughout would enhance the presentation. In addition, some sections lack critical details. For example, the term *neutropenia* is described as a lack of white blood cells, but no differentiation is made between total white blood count and the number of neutrophils. This could be confusing for some patients receiving chemotherapy. In the discussion of members of the cancer care team, board certification is one of the criteria for evaluation of oncologists. However, the lack of congruence in the discussion of oncology nurses is noticeable. National oncology nursing certification is not mentioned.

Strength 4 Your Journey uniquely combines a traditional slide program format with video clips to present complex information that is tailored to patients newly diagnosed with cancer as well as their caregivers. This program would be an excellent resource for newly diagnosed patients and their partners.

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Worth a Look

A Palliative Ethic of Care: Clinical Wisdom at Life's End. *Joseph J. Fins, Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2006, 281 pages, \$39.95.*

A Palliative Ethic of Care: Clinical Wisdom at Life's End was written by a medical ethicist and is targeted toward physicians-in-training to assist them in dealing with dying patients; however, the information also is applicable to nurses-in-training.

Divided into 10 chapters, the text covers topics such as death, dying, and the law, including notable cases and physician-assisted suicide. Several chapters are devoted to goal setting and the Goals of Care Assessment Tool. The role of nurses and other healthcare personnel in palliative care decisions also is described. In addition, the author relates the importance of including patients' family members in palliative care decisions.

The text would be enhanced for physicians-in-training with the inclusion of discussions of nurses' role and the role of families in chapter 1, rather than chapter 10. Real-life examples of effective functioning of the healthcare team (e.g., physicians, nurses, social workers) also would be beneficial.

Although *A Palliative Ethic of Care* covers many topics, it does not provide an in-depth look at many of the ethical issues that are mentioned. Nonetheless, it may stimulate further discussion of critical issues between nurses and physicians.