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Fitchett and Nolans' "Case studies in spiritual care: Healthcare chaplaincy assessments, interventions & outcomes" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Fitchett, G. and Nolan, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Case studies in spiritual care: Healthcare chaplaincy assessments, interventions & outcomes*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 285pp. \$27.95. ISBN 9781785927836

The book is a collection of case studies of chaplaincy/patient relationships and interactions. Each case study includes the discussion of background knowledge, the narration of the integration, verbatim of the dialogues, and is followed by assessment and self-reflection of the chaplain, perspective from other chaplains, and caregivers. Some studies contain single sessions while others document a sequence of meetings. The book provides research level discussion and assessments. It is highly recommended to be used as a textbook for a pastoral care student or chaplains in training.

The studies reflect on basic and more complex chaplaincy duties. Such duties include providing bedside visits, conducting rituals, help patients experience the presence of God, as well as more being more intentional at recognizing each patient's needs, address controversial issues, restore or strengthen faith and spirituality, walk alongside the patients and their families. Readers see the narratives unfolds how an interaction with the chaplains affect not only the patients, but also their families and the caregivers around the patients. All these duties should be conducted under spiritual guidance with experience and care. A chaplain should not force thoughts and beliefs to patients but only guide them with compassion and support.

The book achieves the purpose of introducing research level case studies. The cases contain complex situations such as a patient with terminal disease and suicidal attempts, a family with a baby born with genetic defect and stays in the NICU for months, a transgender veteran, and a victim of sexual abuse and rape. The wording is easy to follow for readers that work in the chaplain profession as well as those who might not be familiar to the profession. To any reader that wishes to learn about the profession, to perfect their chaplaincy or pastoral care skills, or conduct research in relevant fields, this book also provides a rich source of discussions and insights.

The book is well-documented with references at the end of each chapter. The sections and chapters are well arranged. The concepts and procedures of conducting case studies are explained with details in the Foreword. Reading the stories feel

like reading someone's real life stories. Certain chapters contain discussions of controversial issues and may be emotional provoking for readers that are not familiar to the issues.

George Fitchett currently serves as professor and director of the department of Religion Health and Human Values, the college of Health Sciences at Rush University in Chicago, Illinois. He is also the author of *Evidence-Based Healthcare Chaplaincy* and *Assessing Spiritual Needs: A Guide for Caregivers*. Steve Nolan works as Chaplain at Princess Alice Hospice, Surrey, UK and Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester, UK.

Reviewer

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