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Matthews' "Ethical Questions in Healthcare Chaplaincy: Learning to Make Informed Decision" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Matthews, P. (2018). *Ethical Questions in Healthcare Chaplaincy: Learning to Make Informed Decisions*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 190 pp. \$27.95. ISBN 9781784507886

Dr. Pia Matthews is a Senior Lecturer of Bioethics, Medical Law, Theology and Healthcare Ethics at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, UK.

This book is an introductory overview of topics that healthcare chaplains need to think about. It is a good book for both currently practicing chaplains or those training to become chaplains.

This book is a college-level textbook to guide healthcare chaplains through challenging ethical scenarios as they try to support patients and their families all while preserving their own personal integrity and well-being. It follows the Christian tradition of pastoral and spiritual care without a particular denominational slant. It focuses on applied ethics in various situations.

The introduction overviews the book's methodology, goals, and outline. Then, each chapter begins with a topical case study and continues with practical and legal and ethical discussions and concludes with reflection questions and a summary of guidance for healthcare chaplains. Topics covered include: chaplaincy guidelines, code of conduct, standards, competencies, confidentiality, human dignity, informed consent, boundaries, privacy, truth-telling, trust, abortion, life support, euthanasia, grief/bereavement, burnout, and conscientious objection. The case studies are fictitious and most include more ethical issues than would be found in any one particular situation. Each chaplain is expected to follow a set of "basic core values" which include: safeguarding patients, personal responsibility, personal accountability, transparency, respect, caring, and integrity. It encourages using the "see clearly/judge rightly/act compassionately" model of ministry. It concludes with four pages of resources and eight pages of indexes.

Although it is a shorter book, it touches on many of the most important questions to consider. It is a clear and thoughtful contribution to healthcare chaplaincy preparations. The work is not stuffy or academic, but definitely meaningful and practical.

Reviewer

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