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# Cancer in Context

A practical guide to  
supportive care

James Brennan

Cancer in Context: A Practical Guide to Supportive Care, James Brennan, Oxford University Press, 2004, 0198515251, 9780198515258, 424 pages. This book offers healthcare professionals, academics and anyone affected by cancer a fresh and original approach to the supportive care of people with cancer. It looks at some of the underlying reasons why cancer often leads to high levels of distress. More importantly, it suggests many practical ways distress can be prevented and minimised. The book combines the actual experiences of cancer patients, as recorded in their personal diaries, with theory, research and practical clinical advice. In each of its seven chapters the book takes a different perspective and a different approach to supportive care in cancer. Chapter 1 considers how people generally manage and adjust to change in their lives and in particular how they react to the threat of cancer. Chapter 2 examines the 'lived experience' of people with cancer as they negotiate the many challenges and changes following their diagnosis. Chapter 3 looks at the impact of cancer on the families, partners and carers of people with cancer. Chapter 4 shows that the social and cultural context of someone's life is critical to an understanding of their resources and responses to serious illness. Chapter 5 considers how professionals can help minimise disruption to their patients quality of life as they endure the notorious demands of oncology treatments. It looks at popular cancer treatments, common treatment difficulties, cancer rehabilitation and palliative care. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the burgeoning area of communication skills within healthcare and, finally, Chapter 7 ponders how professionals can maintain adequate care in light of the evidence of high levels of stress and burnout among cancer staff..

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Supportive and Palliative Care in Cancer An Introduction, Claud F. B. Regnard, Margaret Kindlen, Jan 1, 2002, Medical, 193 pages. Designed for professionals at every level who are new to this area of care, this is a basic introduction to the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, and to the key ....

Loss, Change and Bereavement in Palliative Care , Pam Firth, Gill Luff, David Oliviere, Dec 1, 2004, Social Science, 215 pages. "For anyone seeking to develop their understanding of loss and change, whether in a palliative care of general or social care setting, this book contains much useful material ....

Qualitative Health Psychology Theories and Methods, Michael Murray, Kerry Chamberlain, Mar 28, 1999, Medical, 262 pages. `This book constitutes a valuable resource for postgraduate students and researchers. Most.... of the chapters succeed in providing a clear and comprehensive introduction to ....

Psycho-Oncology , Thomas N. Wise, Massimo Biondi, Anna Costantini, 2013, Medical, 360 pages. Psycho-oncology was written to assist oncologists, physicians, psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians, and hospital chaplains in understanding and offering supportive ....

Information Graphics A Comprehensive Illustrated Reference, Robert L. Harris, 1999, Business & Economics, 448 pages. For anyone involved in making presentations, producing written work or quantifying data, this book describes each type of information graphic, and discusses their advantages ....

Endocrine therapy in malignant disease , Basil Arnold Stoll, 1972, , 442 pages. .

Stepping Into Palliative Care 2 Care and Practice, Jo Cooper, 2006, Medical, 254 pages. "The second edition of this text has been greatly expanded and updated, and is now available in two companion volumes. Stepping into Palliative Care 2 focuses on symptom ....

Innovations in Cancer and Palliative Care Education , Lorna Foyle, Janis Hostad, 2007, Medical, 280 pages. Designed for teachers in cancer and palliative care, this work covers the complex changes in cancer and palliative care delivery. It includes highlighted key points, self help ....

Stress in health professionals , Roy Payne, Jenny Firth-Cozens, 1987, Self-Help, 288 pages. .

The chromatographic separation and quantitative measurement of caffeic acid and chlorogenic acids , Alan H. Silver, 1956, , 64 pages. .

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An exceptionally well written book with appeal and accessibility to three groups that are involved in supportive care of the terminally ill: the patient, the health care professional, and the family/friends of the patient. The work is immediately relevant to health care professionals in understanding their roles in caring for the terminally ill. The book is also helpful to family members and friends who find themselves in the caregiver role. It brings everything down to a human level for all three parties: the emotions and perspectives of the patient, and the practical and emotional challenges faced by the caregivers.

The author has managed to write a book at a level that is neither too simplistic nor overly technical. The use of medical jargon is kept to a necessary minimum. The needs/emotions/outlook of the patient and the roles of the professionals and non professionals who care for them are illustrated in a style that is easy to read and a perspective that is empathic.

"It is all too rare to find sensitivity and knowledge in perfect balance among the medicos; with the joy of discovery, therefore, I read Dr Brennan's book, *Cancer in Context*, and with genuine enthusiasm I can recommend it to anyone - professional or layperson - caring for or about a cancer patient."--Irma Kurtz, Writer, Journalist and Broadcaster

"*Cancer in Context: A Practical Guide to Supportive Care*, is a sensible, humane, and sophisticated examination of the challenges facing patients, their families, and those who care for them. The deep understanding conveyed by this book will lead to more compassionate and effective care."--David Spiegel, M.D., Willson Professor in the School of Medicine, Stanford University, USA

"...the nearest one can get to actually experiencing living with cancer...it is written in an empathic and flowing style, which helps draw the reader along. Each of the seven chapters deals with a different aspect of supportive care in cancer, and includes a discussion on families and

active adjustment anxiety assessment assumptions asylum seekers become behaviour beliefs bereavement body breast cancer cancer patients cancer treatment carers cause changes Chapter chemotherapy clinical clinical depression clinical supervision clinicians communication concerns consider context coping cultural death denial depression diagnosis difficult disease distress doctors effects emotional support ethnic example expectations experience face family members fatigue fear feel gender groups Health Psychology healthcare professionals healthcare staff healthcare team homeless hospital illness impact important individual interventions involved Journal lead levels lives loss lumpectomies lung cancer manage mastectomy medicine nausea needs normal nurses Oncology pain palliative particular partner patients and families people's person physical problems prostate cancer Psycho-Oncology psychological psychosocial radiotherapy reassurance refugees relationship response role sense sexual side-effects social class social support someone sometimes stoma stress surgery symptoms talk tamoxifen testicular cancer therapy tion understand women worry

Psycho-social oncology has made significant progress in understanding the impact of cancer and its treatment on people's lives. This book underlines the fact that supportive care is an integral part of the treatment of cancer. *Cancer in Context* explores the underlying reasons why cancer so often leads to high levels of distress and, more importantly, suggests many practical ways distress can be minimised and prevented. The actual experiences of cancer patients, as recorded in

*Hospice Information Bulletin* I feel the book comprises a very comprehensive overview of supportive care, presented in a clear way and accessible form. It is a book that anyone involved in the care of cancer patients should find relevant and informative and may well want on their own bookshelves in addition to their organisation's library.

Dr Julian Abel, Consultant in Palliative Medicine, Weston General Hospital, Weston-super-Mare ...focuses on the experiences of people who have been diagnosed with cancer. One of the great strengths of this book is that these experiences are explained as a normal reaction. I highly recommend this book. It is useful for all those who care for patients with cancer, specialist and nonspecialist alike. It is comprehensive in its breadth and is well written. It has practical suggestions of improving practice and has an extensive bibliography for those interested to read further.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this book is to integrate phenomenology, academic research and clinical practice into a practical guide for providing supportive care to oncology patients. This book is a worthy resource because it mainly focuses on the psychosocial needs of patients, as well as their support systems and the health care providers. The author stayed true to the book's purpose throughout the text.

**Audience:** Health care providers in any health care discipline will find this book to be a necessary resource that will help them to maximize their caregiving. Professors will be able to utilize this book as an adjunct to a course textbook because it expands the knowledge base of psychosocial needs related to the oncology patient. The author writes in a credible fashion and appears to possess experience in working with oncology healthcare providers and patients. However, no academic credentials or years of experience were mentioned in the book.

**Features:** This book mainly focuses on the psychosocial needs of the oncology patient and his support system. Concerns related to communication needs, family and partner relationships, and the emerging personal psychosocial struggles following the diagnosis of cancer were expected by this reviewer and well-covered by the author. The chapter related to social concerns such as homelessness, ethnicity, refugees, asylum seekers and gender was very thought-provoking and revealed much depth to the author's experience and research. The last chapter was devoted to caring for the oncology health professional and reinforced the existing fund of information related to stress, burnout, guilt and involvement. This book is not a comprehensive resource by the author's own admission. It does not cover cancer prevention and screening, cancer genetics, psychoneuroimmunology, childhood cancers and euthanasia. The author primarily focuses on the

psychosocial needs of people linked to cancer and provides depth and credible information. Unfortunately, the book lacks attractiveness and hopefully the reader will be willing to ignore this finding.

Assessment: This reviewer found this book to be very interesting and thought-provoking. The author included some information that enlightened the reviewer about various social concerns related to the oncology patient. The information will help health care providers to care for patients in a more sensitive and holistic manner.

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