



Counseling Individuals With Life-Threatening Illness

Kenneth J. Doka PhD

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With a Foreword by Robert A. Neimeyer, PhD

Where was this book when I was new as a counselor?...Fortunately, it is here now, and with all the scope, depth, resourcefulness, and balance required for such situations."

-Dr. Robert Kastenbaum, PhD

This book will now be an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to understand, counsel, or otherwise help individuals with life-threatening illnesses and their family members.

--Charles A. Corr, PhD, CT

Without question, this is the book you'll want your own caregivers to have read should you ever contend with life-threatening illness.

--Therese A. Rando, PhD, BCETS, BCBT

Life-threatening illness is not only a medical crisis; it is a psychological, social, and spiritual crisis as well. Also, serious illness affects not only the patient, but the patient's family. Therefore, the two major premises of this book are that care in life-threatening illness must be holistic, and it must be family centered.

Doka presents an insightful, comprehensive guide for counselors, social workers, and health care professionals, as they assist clients experiencing a serious illness. The book builds on a model developed by the author, based upon earlier work by Avery Weisman and E. M. Patterson.

Doka's model presents illness as a series of phases:

- Prediagnostic: individuals may decide how to handle troubling symptoms or to take certain diagnostic tests
- Diagnostic: centered on the existential crisis posed by the diagnosis
- Chronic: individuals must cope with the disease and treatment
- Recovery: acknowledges that even when individuals survive an encounter with life-threatening illness, there are still considerable issues that must be resolved
- Terminal phase: individuals deal with the inevitability of death

In his discussion of each phase, the author delineates specific tasks for patients to perform and the issues they must adapt to. He also presents strategies for counselors and health care professionals to use with individuals in each phase of illness.

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