

B O O K S

Shelter From the Storm: Caring for a Child With a Life-Threatening Condition. *Joanne M. Hilden and Daniel R. Tobin.* Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2003, 218 pages, \$15.95.

 **Softcover**



Children with life-threatening conditions are helped the most when their parents are empowered with the information and skills necessary to be participating members of the healthcare team. Parents

need to be able to ask tough questions and be willing to talk about possibilities that no parent ever wants to consider, but they need help to accomplish these monumental tasks.

Shelter From the Storm: Caring for a Child With a Life-Threatening Condition is written for parents who are caring for children with life-threatening illnesses and contains powerful information, practical suggestions, and supportive guidance. With the help of parents who have lived through similar experiences, the authors acknowledge the sense of loss and range of emotions that parents may experience at each stage of their child's illness trajectory. The difficult decisions that parents have to make are supported by the authors' recognition of the parents as experts regarding their child. Parents are reassured that decisions made out of love for their child are the right decisions.

The information in this book is conveyed in a sensitive and hopeful manner, using language that is easy to understand. The book is

timely, given the growing interest in pediatric palliative care. Parents will appreciate the practical suggestions such as

- What questions to ask and when to ask them
- How to involve friends and family
- How to provide developmentally appropriate information to siblings
- How to involve the sick child in decision making
- What to expect at various stages of illness
- How to assign meaning to a child's life
- How to find hope in every situation
- How to create lasting and meaningful memories
- How to come to terms with the reality that their child will die
- How to find help dealing with grief and loss.

One of the strengths of this text is that its topics are organized into steps, instead of a sequencing of events, where readers can go to find information. Readers can skip a topic if it does not apply to their situation or they can peruse the information in smaller doses, depending on their needs. In addition, an index of terms is helpful in quickly locating a particular topic. Some of the topics are introduced only briefly, but the authors do include an annotated bibliography for further reading in addition to a list of information resources.

The authors promote pediatric palliative care a giant step forward with their publication. *Shelter From the Storm* should be required reading for all pediatric healthcare providers because it conveys parents' perceptions of what is helpful during these trying circumstances. The authors also model effective ways to communicate bad news. This resource is invaluable for parents who want to learn more about how to


effectively care for their gravely ill child at home or in the hospital. If parents are informed, involved, and prepared, they may derive a sense of peace from the knowledge that they have done everything possible for their child.

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Cancers of the Mouth and Throat: A Patient's Guide to Treatment. *William M. Lydiatt and Perry J. Johnson.* Omaha, NE: Addicus Books, 2001, 172 pages, \$14.95.

 **Softcover**



Cancers of the Mouth and Throat: A Patient's Guide to Treatment begins with a well-rounded discussion of the different types of mouth and throat cancer, signs and symptoms, staging, treatment options, and post-treatment considerations. Readers will find practical information regarding chemotherapy and radiation therapy and their side effects, as well as content about symptom and pain management and clinical trials. The text also includes resources for patients and caregivers and an excellent glossary of cancer-related terminology. The authors also address the emotional aspect of the cancer experience through poetry.


Despite its strengths, this text has some limitations. First, *Cancers of the Mouth and Throat* does not discuss the various nutritional issues that patients may experience as a result of head and neck cancer or its treatment. Second, although initially written in clear and easy-to-understand language, the tone becomes more complex such as in


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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

Book Size

 Pocket size

 Intermediate

 Desk reference