
This is a volume edited by John A. Toner, Lynn M. Tepper, and Beverly Greenfield. It includes 21 essays composed by 27 authors who write with varying degrees of new information, quality, and relevance toward the audience. Who is the intended audience? Unfortunately, the editors do not grant us the courtesy of spelling out their intentions. However, after reading this volume from cover to cover, I hypothesize that it was written for those who need an overall understanding of the inner workings of Long Term Care (LTC) facilities. I assume this audience includes entry level administrators and college students who are planning to pursue a career in LTC administration.
The 21 short chapters cover a wide variety of issues. Frankly, I can not think of one important issue the editors omitted. Since the editors did not provide topical sections for the chapters—commonly found in this type of monograph—it is difficult for me to provide an overall summary of the context. In fact, the editors seemed to have randomly placed the chapters. I have conceptualized the chapters into the following categories: Overall description of LTC (6 chapters), General administration of LTC (3 chapters), Financial issues (1 chapter), Social problems and intervention (4 chapters), Psychological problems and intervention (2 chapters), Medical care (5 chapters). The editors would have a better volume if they would have developed a simple conceptual framework.

Since the monograph’s subtitle indicates practical application, an appropriate question is, “How useful are the chapters?” Some are excellent. I particularly liked, “Professionalization of Nurse’s Aides” (chapter 6) and “The Impact of Recent Mental Health Legislation of Long Term Care.” I felt a smile come to my face when Birkett (chapter 15) concluded that OBRA requirements are not achieving the intended goal and might serve more harm than good. On the other hand the chapter entitled, “Is the Nursing Home Right for You?”, seems clearly out of place. It should have never been included because it was not intended to be read by the same audience as the remaining chapters. This is not Sutker’s (the author) responsibility but rather a criticism that must be leveled toward the editors and publishers.

Three additional editorial issues are particularly annoying. Too much redundancy is found among the chapters. A number of authors start out with the identical introductory theme: the elderly cohort is the fastest growing in our population. Not only is the redundancy somewhat annoying, but anyone who has gone to the trouble of reading this monograph is already well acquainted with these elementary topics. Second, some of the chapters lack documentation that would be necessary for the audience. For example, in Tepper’s nicely-written chapter on Group Therapy, she briefly discusses major group methods. Of the eight categories, she offers additional citations for only two. An administrator would be unable to easily use this chapter to assist his/her staff with group work. In fact, six of the chapters offer no citations at all. Third, the most
crippling complaint about this volume is the absence of an index. With today's current word processing technology, it is inconceivable how Charles Press could permit this volume to be published without an index. Why is an index important? If one of the authors makes a significant contribution (i.e., Birkett's chapter 15) it may forever be lost to the reader and will never be found by potential readers (i.e., a library patron seeking specific information).

Is this a good book? The weaknesses include its lack of structure and some minor redundancy found in the chapters. The absence of an index seriously handicaps the author's potential contribution to most readers. The publishers and editors should consider these weaknesses on their next project. Strengths? Many intelligent ideas are included in these well-written chapters. As indicated in the body of this review, some of the chapters have the potential of making a significant impact of policy and service delivery.

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