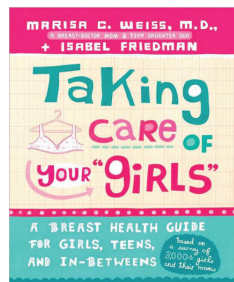


BOOKS

Taking Care of Your “Girls”: A Breast Health Guide for Girls, Teens, and In-Betweens. Marisa C. Weiss and Isabel Friedman. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008, 256 pages, paperback, \$15.95.



Taking Care of Your “Girls”: A Breast Health Guide for Girls, Teens, and In-Betweens is written for young women as an educational tool to guide them

throughout the changes they experience as their breasts develop. Based on results of a survey of more than 3,000 girls in grades 6–12, the authors’ respond to questions and concerns on topics ranging from what is normal to issues surrounding self-esteem.

Each chapter begins with statements or questions from the girls themselves that deal with a theme, which the authors then discuss. The statements show that the young women who participated in the survey are bright, thoughtful, and seeking straightforward information. Weiss (the founder of BreastCancer.org) and her daughter, Friedman, do an exceptional job at addressing the girls’ concerns.

This book has several major strengths. The text is well written, easy to understand, and empowering to young women. The book is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on breast development, including normal breast changes, benign conditions seen in young women, breast self-examination instruction, and tests that may be performed to evaluate a finding. The second part focuses on issues surrounding self image and dispels misconceptions regarding breast cancer. A particularly well written chapter in part 2 discusses how to find the right bra for each body type. The book does not have to be read from front to back; readers can focus on a specific chapter and read others later. The bulleted items address concerns young women have in attempting to discuss sensitive issues with their parents. The chapters “Self-image and Teasing,” “Show off, Cover Up, or Glide By,” and “When You Want

Your Breast Size to Be Different” provide honest and accurate information with practical advice to allow the individual to make an informed decision. In addition, the book addresses common myths surrounding breast cancer development (e.g., tight bras, antiperspirants) and provides the reader with accurate information on risk factors. The final chapter, “Think Pink, Live Green,” stresses that limited information is available regarding the environment and the link to developing breast cancer. However, healthy lifestyle choices are encouraged.

Consistent with the author’s intentions, the book provides sound medical information on breast health and cancer with candid information on embracing the changes experienced during adolescence. The book ends by providing readers with specific resources that address overall health and wellness, positive body image, environmental issues, and information on breast health and breast cancer. *Taking Care of Your “Girls”* is a valuable resource to encourage a dialogue between the generations regarding breast health for oncology nurses working with various age groups in the community as well as individuals who have or are at increased risk for breast cancer.

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Tales From the Pager Chronicles. Patrice Rancour. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International, 2008, 232 pages, paperback, \$19.95.



Tales From the Pager Chronicles is a realistic portrayal of the harried and challenging role of a nurse who puts her heart on the line on a regular basis. Whether every day is this crazy in Rancour’s position

or the book just covers a particularly busy nonstop shift is unclear, but the message is obvious: To be a fully engaged nurse who truly cares for patients is exhausting business. As each of Rancour’s scenarios ends, her pager goes off and she rushes to her next patient. The use of the pager provides a great transition from story to

story but also gives a sense of how busy a working nurse’s day can be.

Rancour gives readers a peek into the angst-ridden experiences of patients and families facing end-of-life issues and the importance of nurses in guiding them at this difficult time. In the first story, “Blythe Spirit in the Medical Intensive Care Unit,” Rancour’s pager goes off immediately when she turns it on. She is called to the bedside of a woman who just died after months of problems following bone marrow transplantation and nearly three years since her cancer diagnosis. Her husband now is trying to deal with the realization that their long journey together is ending.

The core of what Rancour does involves “presence”—the ability to just “be there” with someone and let them talk (or not talk), allowing them to be comforted by her nonjudgmental patience. In the first story, Rancour reflects on how important being a “fighter” was to this woman and her husband. Readers witness her comforting words as well as her personal thoughts as she helps the husband face the loss of the most important person in his life. At the end of her visit, the man asks her, “How do you do this all day long, day after day?” This question may cross readers’ minds as Rancour’s day progresses.

Another story, “An Old Wound Still Festering,” illustrates the importance of Rancour’s presence to the staff at her hospital. A troubled young nurse asks Rancour to help her understand a patient’s behavior, only to discover that her self-doubts and anxiety stem from her own unresolved grief related to her mother’s death from breast cancer. The young nurse wanted to have “closure” with her mother, who had wanted to die on her own terms without dwelling “on the negative.” Rancour helps the new nurse start to face her regrets related to her mother’s death and see how the realization can affect her relationships with her patients.

Rancour is an advanced practice nurse who specializes in psychiatry and end-of-life issues, so she is trained, equipped, and willing to jump headlong into difficult situations. However, most healthcare providers are not. Training is improving with the continued push to increase education about palliative care. Nurses are skilled patient advocates, educators, and champions when they feel knowledgeable and empowered to stand up for something important. Unfortunately, too many still

lack the knowledge to be true advocates for patients and their families.

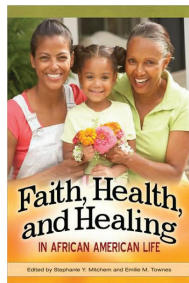
As the workforce ages, nurses are confronting end-of-life issues in their professional lives and, increasingly, in their personal lives as well. Rancour's text provides a wide variety of different scenarios to consider. Her compassion, understanding, and humble skill can set the standard for nurses who are hungry for such knowledge.

The discussion questions increase the book's value as a teaching tool for educators and nurses who further wish to explore the issues presented. Rancour also has included a set of questions for lay persons that encourage a discussion of the feelings the stories might generate. The glossary was a nice addition to help readers understand common medical terms.

Overall, *Tales From the Pager Chronicles* is an easy (albeit painful at times) read that leaves audiences with a deeper understanding of the complex emotional issues that nurses face regularly. Rancour exemplifies a person trying hard to address these issues with compassion and skill.

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Faith, Health, and Healing in African American Life. Stephanie Y. Mitchem and Emilie M. Townes. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2008, 232 pages, hardcover, \$49.95.



In *Faith, Health, and Healing in African American Life*, Mitchem and Townes compile a series of holistic approaches that reach beyond the traditional biomedical model of health by recognizing the individual as a part of a family and community.

The themes of the book range from natural and supernatural beliefs and practices of some individuals throughout time to the examination of environmental injustices, which are conveyed as illnesses that affect the entire universe. One section highlights health in the past, as slaves' opportunities for health and healing often were in the hands of their owners. The moral values of slaves enabled them to focus on care, concern, and compassion for each other.

For some people, treatment and perceptions are rooted in religion. For others, religion may be a hindrance to seeking

improvement and advancing toward health. For example, some people view illness and healing as the role of a spiritualist or decide to accept their condition as God's will for their life at a particular point in time. Though not often associated with religion, depression is another common area of illness among African Americans in which their choices to access care may be delayed. Townes emphasizes the necessity for people to face grief and loss. She acknowledges the need to turn to faith, and contends that when individuals deal with grief, their faith grows as they become richer, fuller people. The section of the book that ends the focus on the art of rituals and practices discusses personal meditation and keen awareness of the need to nurture and care for the body. Several practical methods of eliminating stress while maximizing health, predominantly of black women, are provided. When individuals practice self-love through meditation, it becomes a personal act of faith.

The final two sections of the book analyze social realities followed by discovering and crafting wellness. Concepts of community, faith, and healing in the African American community were once a part of continuity experienced within various geographic locations; however, now social networks are spread far and wide but are without limits of physical location. Although multiple types of displacement have occurred in African American communities throughout the years, many still are able to organize as they face what the authors refer to as incessant displacement. The social disorganization that results often is a motivator that fuels the group's ability to lessen pain and reduce losses by engaging in activities such as recording accounts of the old days and reflecting on community norms. Giving displaced residents the opportunity to share the pain of their grief and its lasting impact enables the manifestation of faith and hope for the future.

Another social reality explored in the book is the unspoken, spoken, and affirmed existence of same-gender oriented African Americans and how they relate to the black church. The book notes related injuries to groups of African Americans with varying experiences that often lead to depression and despair. Townes also emphasizes the necessity of community during the healing process. The book ends with a call for African American women to seek healing for their souls and their bodies. The authors reference the repeated history of African

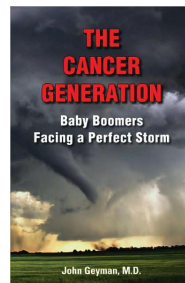
American women maintaining personal development while caring for others. In stark contrast, the consequences often include stress and ensuing illness and disease.

Although many people can identify with various concepts in the book, healthcare providers could gain valuable insight into the multidimensional lives of African Americans in the United States. The reviewer encourages readers to be mindful of the various subcultures within ethnic groups and to know that not all groups of people within a culture have experienced or witnessed all aspects of life as described in this book.

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NEW RELEASES

The Cancer Generation: Baby Boomers Facing a Perfect Storm. John Geyman. Monroe, MA: Common Courage Press, 2009, 375 pages, \$18.95.



Cancer incidence in aging baby boomers will increase, and the healthcare system is not prepared for the growing number of patients. As a result, single-payer health care should be created. In *The Cancer Generation*, Geyman shows how the lives of more than 100,000 patients could be saved each year if health care was focused on access as well as continued development of cutting-edge therapies.

Cancer is or will be a part of every baby boomer's life, whether the disease presents in a parent, spouse, friend, or son or daughter. How baby boomers reshape what cancer care means in America will define their generation and affect the future for generations to come.

Featured descriptions of books and other media in New Releases are provided by publishers to alert readers to recent or forthcoming resources only and have not been reviewed independently for the *Oncology Nursing Forum*. Gerald Bennett, PhD, APRN, FAAN, can be reached at pubONF@ons.org, with copy to editor at ONFEditor@ons.org.

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