Resilience in Palliative Care: Achievement in Adversity

This book offers insights into how, at all levels of planning and delivering palliative care, there is the opportunity to maximize coping and increase the capacity of strengthened teams and organizations.

The first book of its kind, "Resilience and Palliative Care: Achievement in Adversity" takes the increasing international literature on resilience and applies it to palliative and end of life care. The book offers an overview of all key aspects of palliative care, presented through a resilience perspective. Why do some patients and families break down while others surmount the challenges facing them? What interventions strengthen individual, family and community coping? This book aims to facilitate change with people facing the crisis of death, dying and bereavement. Much of the existing literature has focused on risk, problems and vulnerability, but this emerging concept of resilience focuses on strengths and possibilities.

The 'total pain,' 'total care' approach pioneered by Dame Cicely Saunders and St. Christopher's Hospice now needs reinterpreting in the light of changing contexts and challenges. The realities of demographic change and resource-constrained health and social care environments have generated an increasingly risk focused approach to service delivery. A narrowly medicalized approach has inevitable limitations; professional care alone will be unable to meet need and demand in the face of ageing populations, changing patterns of illness and the need for equity.

The resilience approach offers a counterbalance that harnesses the strengths of individuals and the communities in which they live and in which most of their dying will take place. Resilience thinking emphasizes the importance of public health and creates a partnership between patients, professionals and community structures, seeking to build community capacity and to deliver a preventive health care that will leave future generations less afraid of the dying and bereavement that will confront all of us.

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