

Communicating in the health sciences

Joy Higgs, Rola Ajjawi, Lindy McAllister, Franziska Trede, and Stephen Loftus, *Oxford University Press, 2012, Third Edition, ISBN 978-0-1955-7904-8, 368 pages. RRP: \$70 (Fishpond <<http://www.fishpond.co.nz>>)*

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The great Greek philosopher Epictetus once said, "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." Skilled communication involves developing both listening and speaking skills but this publication presents communication as much more than just these simple acts.

Following the second edition, published in 2008, this third edition as in former editions uses a 'person-centred' practice approach but has gone through a major restructure and layout, allowing for better flow, and reader learning. This book is easy to read by striking a balance through the use of plain English with that of professional language.

Each chapter starts with a list of key topics and terms, with good use of margin definitions and in many parts the text has been enriched with more extensive content. As in former editions, this book continues the use of 'handy hints', flow-charts, tables and figures, though sadly none in colour which would have given it a more aesthetic appeal to the reader. Finally this third edition has added a new chapter titled 'Digital Communication in a Networked World' to keep pace with the rapid advancement and ever increasing use of technology in the field of communication in healthcare. This chapter introduces to the reader the concept of a digital identity, use of eportfolios, social media and mobile learning. While the text does point out the advantages and disadvantages using these communication mediums, it lacks the necessity to educate the reader about the protection of health workers and patients/clients from digital identity theft and/or the release of personal sensitive and confidential information into the networked world.

This third edition book is intended equally for the student, academic and clinician. The book achieves this by using three logical sections in its layout. The first two parts of the book encompass communication skills within the academic setting. Parts three and four delve into communication skills required working in the professional/clinical work environment, when communicating with patients/clients, carers, colleagues, and other health professionals alike. The final part of the book focuses on advanced professional skills such a thesis and journal writing, and preparing poster and conference presentations.

There are many texts published on the subject of 'communication in healthcare', however, few exist where the majority of contributing authors hail from Australia; though sadly none from New Zealand. This and with its approach to communication skills should allow the New Zealand reader to identify easily with its philosophy of a person-centred model of health care.

As an academic and lecturer teaching in an undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum I would recommend this book to my colleagues and students as an good starting guide to

communication in the health care setting. It will provide students with good structure while developing their skills in communication throughout their formative academic and clinical learning years. While more limited, the fifth part of this book offers important information and tips to the practitioner planning to return to academia to undertake further post-graduate study.

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