

BOOK REVIEWS



Gordon Hillsman, *Spiritual Care in Common Terms* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017), 290 pp.

Since 1966, when Howard Clinebell's *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* was first published, it has been the standard work for introducing pastoral care and counseling to generations of laypeople, ministers, and professional spiritual care providers. For these people, it is the "how to" of pastoral care.

In the same way, Gordon Hillsman's recent publication, *Spiritual Care in Common Terms*, provides the "how to" of professional spiritual care documentation, offering clear instructions and excellent examples. Historically, the work of spiritual care providers has not been documented well. As the profession gains more attention and validation for its service, professional chaplains must adapt to health care expectations, including excellence in documentation. It is Hillsman's belief, and mine as well, that the chaplain's note is designed to advance the plan of care and "elevate the human spirit," and *Spiritual Care in Common Terms* helps us do just that.

Since reading the book, the members of my department have taken it upon ourselves to invest in improving our documentation. We practice our documentation consistently for every meaningful consult, we have staff meetings to review excellent notes, and we require peer reviews on documentation. All this is an effort to advance the plan of care as a valuable member of the interdisciplinary team. As we review our notes more regularly, we are discovering that our patient consults are improving because we are learning from one another. We are better chaplains with patients because of our attention to documentation. Documentation requires us to put meaning-

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ful language to a meaningful encounter. As I instruct and train chaplains, I find that Clinebell and Hillsman are the perfect pair to set the foundation for the standard of practice in spiritual care. Hillsman reminds us that chaplains make a difference. Because we can put language to our consults, chaplains can make measurable contributions to advance the plan of care.

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