

THE US Review of Books

Personal Care Handbook: Survival Beyond the Caregiver

by Gloria Lopez
Trafford Publishing

reviewed by Jacquelyn Gilchrist

"A caregiver is the peace offered an individual who requires some special assistance."

With more than four decades of professional caregiving experience and as a mother of a child with spina bifida, Lopez is well suited to produce this workbook for patients. There are many books available to help caregivers cope with the physical and emotional demands of caregiving, but Lopez's work is unique in that it empowers the patients themselves to manage their own needs. When a loved one needs special care, family caregivers rush from task to task in a frenzy to get everything done. This handbook introduces some structure and order to the chaos.

The primary goal of this handbook is to ensure a continuity of care. It's impractical to expect that primary caregivers would be able to provide for their loved one's needs forever. When care is shifted to another person, the patient's needs and special issues can easily be miscommunicated and serious medical errors may result. By filling out the worksheets and following the checklists, patients and their caregivers can prevent these problems.

Lopez appears to have thought of everything that a patient might possibly need. From allergy lists to medications to wound healing observances, this handbook has it all. She has even included a checklist of factors to consider when hiring a new caregiver. The daily schedule of medications and medical occurrence log are particularly helpful. Caregivers may wish to make copies of these pages to prepare for future changes. Also helpful is the practical advice that Lopez scatters among the worksheets and checklists. Readers should pay particular attention to the medication management guidance to prevent potentially dangerous errors.

RECOMMENDED by the US Review