ForeWord Reviews
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The Person-Centered Way
James H. Collins
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Most people think of nursing homes as unpleasant places, with bad smells, bad food, and an emphasis on the nursing aspect rather than the idea of home. Gerontologist James H. Collins wants to help change that. In The Person-Centered Way, he provides a road map for institutions that want to provide a better experience for their patients, workers, and residents' families.

Collins argues that everything about the experience of long-term care should be altered to place the focus on the patient instead of the work of a patient's care. A key part of that is remembering that the facility isn't just a place of business; it's a home for the people who live there.

"Any enhancements made to the facility can dramatically change a traditional institution into a supportive and nurturing environment that reminds us of home." he writes. "…Building a nursing home that looks like a residential dwelling can produce a number of positive effects on residents such as improved mood and reduced behaviors, increased socialization, and a more relaxed state of mind."

Improving the experience for residents isn't just about cosmetic changes, of course. Collins says that changing the way food is prepared and served is a good way to start the transition from traditional care to a more person-centered experience. Facilities should also take measures to get rid of their medication carts, make more room for family, and create more flexible schedules that would allow residents to feel at home.

These changes aren't easy, but this book aims to show nursing home managers and others in leadership roles why they need to be made and how to initiate them in their own facilities.

The book has a very limited audience—staff of nursing homes or long-term care facilities, and perhaps tangentially the family members of patients—but those who are concerned about the quality and type of care being given to patients in long-term facilities will find a wealth of information about why these changes are so important, and the mindset shifts that are required to get started.

"Effective person-centered leadership involves believing that residents are important people who deserve to live a fulfilling life and should experience growth every day of their

lives, regardless of their physical or cognitive disorders," Collins writes.

As the number of people in long-term care is sure to increase in the near future, getting more facilities to adopt person-centered care is an important task. Collins makes a persuasive argument for why and how this should be done.

Sarah E. White