

BOOK REVIEW

Taking Control of Your Career and Your Future: For Nurses By Nurses

Edited by Gail Donner & Mary Wheeler

In their recent book, "Taking Control of Your Career and Your Future: For Nurses By Nurses", Donner and Wheeler have created a valuable road map for both beginning and experienced nurses. They are uniquely positioned to provide this information: Donner has been an educator, administrator and leader of a provincial professional association. Wheeler has spent many years in independent practice, working with nurses who are interested in self-development.

The strategies identified in the book, if carried out consistently, will help nurses get the most out of career opportunities that are presented to them, and create opportunities that might not otherwise have been available. With contributions from seven of Donner and Wheeler's professional colleagues, the book examines steps in the career planning process, self-marketing tactics, issues around independent practice, and retirement planning. The book ends with an examination of the ways in which an employer can support nursing staff in their career development and management.

The steps in the career planning process that are described include: scanning your environment, completing your self-assessment and reality check, creating your career vision, and developing your strategic career plan. In the first chapter, Donner emphasizes that the process is an iterative rather than a linear one, and therefore one to which the nurse must be committed to revisiting over time. This framework makes the process useful for

beginning nurses as well as nurses who are looking to undertake a mid-career review.

The book also includes practical advice about development of a resume as well as how to prepare for, carry out and follow up on an employment interview. A particularly helpful chapter for students is one which compares the career planning process to the activities they are learning to carry out with patients in planning and delivering care. The chapter describes ways in which learners can use the environmental scan and self-assessment components to build on previous interests and strengths. The description is enhanced by a number of examples from students who describe how they used their previous experiences to inform their choice of clinical placements, building toward a more informed long term career choice. Such an approach helps them choose an area of specialization within nursing which will allow them to maximize both their skills and their interests.

Although the book represents the work of a number of authors, a clear sense of flow is maintained because each chapter builds on the ones before, with regular references made to material presented earlier in the book.

"Taking Control of Your Career and Your Future: For Nurses By Nurses" represents a valuable contribution to a neglected area for nurses, that of their own career planning and development. Its appearance at a time of restructuring and downsizing is fortuitous. It is a must read for any nurse who is re-evaluating their career and for all students as they begin their career plans.

"Taking Control of Your Career and Your Future: For Nurses By Nurses", edited by Gail J. Donner and Mary M. Wheeler, published by, and available from the Canadian Nurses' Association, 50 The Driveway, Ottawa Ontario, K2P 1E2, \$24.95.

Review by Susan D. Smith, CJNL Associate Editor