INFECTION CONTROL is essential for patient safety yet healthcare workers often fail to take standard precautions in their daily work. In editing this book, Elliott takes a new approach to answering why this is so.

He and the book’s contributors argue that, to solve many healthcare problems, such as why healthcare workers need reminding about hand hygiene and the safe handling of body fluids, the psychosocial factors inherent in them must first be understood.

In Section 1 of the book, the authors explain how several of these factors, including cognitive dissonance, cognitive economy, unrealistic optimism, the health locus of control, egocentric behaviour, personality, attribution and communication, inhibit safe practice.

In Section 2, meanwhile, they focus on the complexities of behavioural change and consider reflection, clinical supervision and education as ways of helping to move towards consistent safe practice.

The authors emphasise the core message of the book by asking readers to reflect repeatedly on how they think and practise, while explanation boxes summarise the concepts in each chapter.

This is a book for readers to return to regularly to question their attitudes and behaviour. One delightful chapter on how clown-doctors integrate safety alongside innovative practice, for example, is an inspiration to hard-pressed healthcare students and practitioners.

This is a book with a positive message concerning the importance of changing how we think about keeping patients safe. Margaret Miers is professor of nursing and social science at the University of the West of England, Bristol

McSHERRY’S BOOK works on two levels. It is a fine example of how to research a subject as ethereal as spirituality but it is also a useful text that explores spirituality as an exciting component of care.

The book is well structured, with highlighted points and chapter summaries, and its reflective questions offer readers opportunities to question their beliefs and assumptions.

I unhesitatingly recommend it to anyone in a caring profession with an interest in the meaning and significance of spirituality. Marion Goodchild is a discharge planning manager at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

AT 640 pages, this book is encyclopaedic in its coverage of the law relating to community care practice. Its structure is coherent and it has a useful contents list and index to guide readers.

Although the book’s text is directed generally at the social services sector, there is much to interest nurses practising outside acute care settings.

I therefore recommend this book for managers in community healthcare environments, and those advanced and specialist practitioners who work in the community.

Marc Cornock is a lecturer in law at The Open University

Paula Elson

Recommended reading

**Introduction to Leadership: Concepts and practice** by Peter G Northouse

This book is an excellent guide for new leaders and those looking to develop their leadership skills.

It is well written and uses simple language to provide a concise introduction to the principles of leadership, while helping readers to recognise their leadership philosophies, traits and styles.

It also offers discussions on the importance of relationships and task, the development of core leadership skills, and the obstacles that may be encountered on the way to effective leadership and how they can be overcome.

Each chapter starts by instructing readers to complete a questionnaire with practical exercises located at the end, rather than the beginning, of the chapter. I found this arrangement annoying but I became less irritated as I began to understand the style of the book.

The text underpins the development of leadership skills, and describes how leaders can plan this by analysing themselves and seeking feedback from others.

Observational exercises particularly help readers to identify skills in others and recognise those that they have, while reflection-and-action worksheets identify ways forward through the development of personal action plans.

Paula Elson is lead facilitator in Wales for the RCN clinical leadership programmes

Reference