opinion / reviews

Excellent ★★★★★ Very good ★★★★★
Good ★★★★ Average ★★★ Poor ★★

Donna Douglas doesn’t disappoint with this book, her eighth in the Nightingale series set in an East End London hospital. It depicts the friendship of Dora and Helen over two years from December 1943. They work in a Nightingale hospital that has opened a ward for prisoners of war. The nurses develop ways of communicating with the patients to overcome the language differences.

Reading this tale brings out an array of emotions. At times it is tense and I couldn’t put it down. The content was very moving.

The book can be read as a standalone, but to get the most from the story I would advise reading the series in order. This is an atmospheric read that will be loved by many.


Reviewed by Valerie McGurk, practice development nurse, paediatrics, Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust

Dementia Activist ★★★★

Author Helga Rohra is living with a diagnosis of young-onset Lewy body dementia. Rohra writes about the experience of discovering something wasn’t right, the fear and apprehension she encountered prior to diagnosis and the difficulties after diagnosis, as well as the impact it had on her family and lifestyle.

Each chapter of the book gives an insight into the feelings and emotions at different stages, and the daily struggles encountered.

Rohra demonstrates great strength by making her voice heard and speaking out about the realities of a dementia diagnosis. Her story teaches us that we should listen and learn from what we are being told by people living with dementia, who are, in fact, the experts.


Reviewed by Shauna Rooney, project facilitator (dementia care framework), Four Seasons Healthcare, Northern Ireland

Revalidation: A Journey for Nurses and Midwives ★★★

This publication informs individual registrants of the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s revalidation requirements.

While I would recommend it to registrants wanting a comprehensive understanding of revalidation and underpinning in-depth theory, there are a few annoying aspects that can cause confusion. Continuity in wording is lacking: ‘fitness for practice’ and ‘fitness to practise’ are both used. The revised code is outlined but delegation is omitted.

The introductory chapter lacks focus, but those on continuing professional development (CPD), feedback, reflection, reflective discussion and confirmation are informative. Excellent examples of CPD and feedback are provided, although the section on the latter lacks clear guidance in linking to the code.

Reflection is demystified and key components highlighted. Models of reflection are explored, but detail of the NMC reflective form as a simple model/framework is scanty. All sections are clearly underpinned by theory.

Reflective discussion and confirmation chapters outline registrant and employer responsibilities, signpost to supporting material, and provide useful appraisal links.

The level of underpinning theory, although useful to some, may be too detailed for registrants looking for revalidation guidance only. Conversely the practice hours section could be expanded.


Carolyn Middleton, professional development & revalidation lead nurse, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board