

Book review

Living Confidently with HIV: A Self-help Book for People Living with HIV

Michelle Croston

*Specialist Nurse, North Manchester General
Hospital*

In the 2016 revised edition of *Living confidently with HIV: A Self-help Book for People Living with HIV* the authors Shaw, Tacconelli, Watson and Herbert write sensitively about the issues that people living with HIV experience. The resource is an up-to-date self-help book, containing extensive coverage of the issues facing people living with HIV (PLHIV). The resource is written by clinical psychologists in the field of sexual health/HIV, stress and trauma, based on their years of clinical experience and research. The use of testimonials from PLHIV enables a wide range of issues to be explored in a humanistic way. Whether you are a healthcare professional, somebody who is interested in supporting someone living with HIV, or living with HIV yourself, the book is informative, written in a clear and direct style, filled with helpful facts, practical tips and self-help guidelines.

The target audience for this book is adults living with HIV who are experiencing difficulties accepting their diagnosis; experiencing problems adjusting to HIV and finding a way forward in their lives; people who have health problems that interfere with their ability to achieve their goals and who are unsure whether they can cope with the demands facing them; people who feel isolated by their diagnosis; or people who are struggling with strong emotions resulting from having HIV. There is also a focus within the book for patients who would like to work on changing specific areas of their life and would like to re-engage with activities that they may have felt no longer able to pursue as a result of their diagnosis. Currently there is very little written material that can help inform and support people in adjusting to their HIV diagnosis. The book aims to provide people living with HIV with positive ways of coping, through empowering them to live their lives to the full.

The book has 14 chapters and is presented in three parts. The first part explores living confidently with HIV, touching on issues of HIV knowledge and facts about the infection, the impact of being diagnosed, negotiating healthcare and social care, coping with medication, challenges around HIV disclosure, child and family HIV, establishing healthy lifestyles and resilience, and finally understanding HIV-related

emotions. This leads nicely into the second part, which focuses on when emotions are difficult, mindfulness and HIV. The final part of the book concentrates on problem-focused strategies and covers the following: strategies for anxiety and depression; problem solving and HIV; and visualising the future.

This self-help book, which is aimed at addressing some of the psychological needs of people who are HIV positive, answers frequently asked questions and draws on the authors' clinical experience of what has helped others in similar situations. The book hopes to normalise the experience of living with HIV by creating hope for change by providing the reader with ways of learning new skills.

In order for the book to be as meaningful as possible for the reader, the authors have included regular 'check-in' times throughout the book. These are designed to help the reader check in and assess where they are with certain aspects or feelings with regards to what they may have read or in relation to their life with HIV.

Many patients living with HIV are reluctant to seek professional help or face long waits or other difficulties accessing psychological support. Within my own clinical practice there have been many times when I have sat with patients and wished they would go to a peer support group or accept a referral to clinical psychology. For me, having the ability to suggest to a patient that they could read this book will hopefully help to alleviate the shame and stigma that PLHIV often carry. As the book comes in an eBook and Kindle version it is ideal for people to have some privacy when reading.

I would recommend this book and hope that you enjoy reading it. The book would also make an excellent resource within the clinic and patients should be encouraged, where appropriate, to access a copy.

This sensitively written volume offers a rich overview of the difficulties and concerns facing people with HIV and provides a wealth of ideas on how to cope with this condition. Readers will gain enormously from this volume. [Professor Paul Gilbert, Founder and President of the Compassionate Mind Foundation]

Living Confidently with HIV is required reading for anyone with HIV or caring for someone with HIV. Written in a clear and direct style, filled with helpful facts, practical tips and self-help guidelines, the reader will find this book an invaluable guide to living a more fulfilling life

with HIV. I recommend this book with enthusiasm. [Dr Robert L Leahy, Past President of the International Association for Cognitive Psychotherapy]

Shaw L, Tacconelli E, Watson R, Herbert C. *Living Confidently with HIV: A Self-help Book for People Living with HIV*, 2016. Available on

Amazon Kindle, i-Book Store, or paperback from Blurb (www.blurb.com). ISBN 978-1-36-470003-4

Correspondence: Michelle Croston
m.croston@mmu.ac.uk

HIV Nursing 2016

There is still time to contribute in 2016!

Themes for this year's issues:

16.3 (Autumn): Student-led issues (student nurse/midwife issues and observations)

Editor: James Meek (jmeek@uclan.ac.uk)

16.4 (Winter): International (developments and innovations in HIV care overseas; reports on placements/secondments/visits; changes and challenges in diverse/other cultural settings)

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- Have you conducted research or instigated practice that has improved care for your patients?
- You may have recently completed a dissertation or degree and would like to present your findings.
- Or perhaps you would like to comment on a specific issue or review a book you have found valuable.

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We welcome all articles, letters, case reports and other contributions of interest to health care professionals working in the field of HIV – and would very much like to hear from NHIVNA members. The usual word count is around 2,000 but shorter (or longer) pieces are also acceptable, and non-themed contributions are welcomed.

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Guidance is available from Editorial Board members, who will be pleased to offer suggestions and answer any questions you may have. More information is available on the NHIVNA website.

If you are interested in having your work published, or would like to know more,

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