

A Guide to Genetic Counseling, 2nd Edition

Editors: Wendy Uhlmann, Jane Schuette, and Beverly Yashar
Wiley-Blackwell (2009)
595 pp., \$79.95 paperback

The field of genetics and genetic counseling has exploded over the last 10 years. Updating the first edition of *A Guide to Genetic Counseling* is a welcome necessity. Few textbooks for genetic counselors exist, and this is one that every genetic counseling student and practicing genetic counselors will be pleased to own. Genetic counseling grew out of a need for practitioners, in particular obstetricians, to explain and obtain informed consent for amniocentesis, and it continues to grow with the need for expertise in explaining the new genetic technologies to individuals and their families. Health professionals are increasingly involved in genetic testing, and genetic counseling is an essential part of the process. This book demystifies the genetic counseling process, exploring the elements involved and providing examples of best practice.

Each chapter is authored by subject matter experts. Many of the chapters from the first edition are present with minimal updating; several, dramatically improved, with new authorship. The chapter on multicultural counseling, authored by Gottfried Oosterwal, lends an expertise by looking at the field of genetic counseling through the eyes of an anthropologist. Case studies in this chapter are identified as “critical incidents,” and responses to the incidents are detailed in the Appendix, forcing the reader to contemplate the resolution before being given tools to do so. New chapters reflect the expansion of the genetic counseling profession, including Baty’s chapter “Risk

Communication and Decision-Making,” Yashar’s chapter “Genetic Counseling Research,” Collins and McInerney’s “Genetic Counselors as Educators,” and Balkite and Smith’s “Evolving Roles, Expanding Opportunities.” The reference and resource materials concluding Collins and McInerney’s chapter are exceptional. In their chapter “Understanding Genetic Testing,” Faucett and Ward give a case example of genetic counseling unraveling one family’s genetic testing saga. More and more, it is the genetic counselor who helps identify the correct test to be ordered and explains the implications of the test, no longer simply diagnostic but essential for management and treatment of disease. Communicating effectively is appropriately the theme of many of the chapters. Teaching the art of communicating prepares genetic counselors for the continuing expansion of roles and expertise.

Appropriately, nondirectiveness is discussed in several chapters in the context of historical perspective and the evolution of shared decision-making. The genetic counseling field has sufficiently evolved such that it is acceptable for genetic counselors to share their expertise with clients and families. This book will assist beginning and seasoned genetic counselors and geneticists do just that. It will also aid nongenetics health professionals in understanding the elements that are required to educate and train the genetic counselor.

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DOI 10.1016/j.ajhg.2010.07.024. ©2010 by The American Society of Human Genetics. All rights reserved.