



# Doing the Right Thing: An Approach to Moral Issues in Mental Health Treatment

*John R. Petzet*

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## **Doing the Right Thing: An Approach to Moral Issues in Mental Health Treatment** John R. Peteet

Here is the first practical guide for dealing with the moral issues that regularly confront clinicians in their work. Written for all mental health professionals, *Doing the Right Thing: An Approach to Moral Issues in Mental Health Treatment* offers a framework both for making moral decisions concerning the treatment of patients and for helping patients deal with their own moral concerns. Drawing on current thinking in several disciplines, *Doing the Right Thing* introduces the concept of moral functioning as a basis for therapeutic influence. Numerous case examples illustrate how to

- \* Assess patients' ability to function morally -- Learn how six basic capacities needed for moral functioning develop, and how identifying problems in an individual's moral functioning can help guide the formulation of a treatment plan.
- \* Treat patients with problems functioning morally -- Appreciate when it is time to set aside neutrality as a therapeutic stance in favor of a more direct approach to helping patients make moral commitments, decisions and self-assessments and develop moral character.
- \* Deal with the moral aspects of clinical decision-making -- Develop a framework for making moral choices in planning the direction of treatment, confronting resistance and addressing problems in caring effectively.
- \* Help patients address moral challenges -- Learn how to take into account your own and the patient's values in reasoning through moral dilemmas. Understand more clearly how to help patients deal with unfair pain caused by others, as well as the guilt and shame caused by their own moral failures.
- \* Employ the therapeutic potential of moral growth, transformation, and integration -- Discover the role of a clinician in helping demoralized patients reformulate their ideals for better outcomes. Recognize where a moral paradigm is useful in improving the delivery of mental health care.

Concise, clear, and clinically relevant, *Doing the Right Thing* is a valuable, thought-provoking guide for both new and seasoned mental health practitioners who live and work in a morally complex environment. It is also an excellent supplementary text for courses dealing with the practice of psychotherapy and the ethical aspects of mental health care.

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