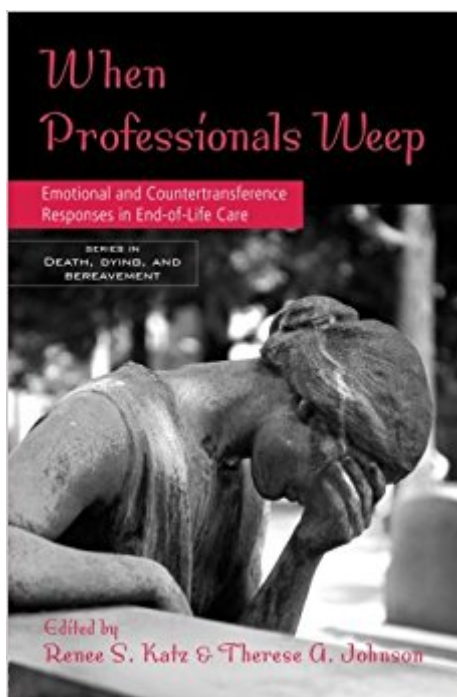


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# When Professionals Weep: Emotional And Countertransference Responses In End-of-Life Care (Series In Death, Dying, And Bereavement)



## Synopsis

Diverse leaders in the field of death, dying, and bereavement, address the issues surrounding the intersection of the personal and the professional in the unique context of end-of-life care. End-of-life care (EOL) is a specialized area of work that crosses a number of academic and professional disciplines, including social work, counseling, hospice, physical medicine, geriatrics, nursing, counseling, psychology, and clerical work. Professionals who work in EOL have often had deeply moving personal experiences with trauma, death, and loss in their own lives, and almost inevitably bring their own histories, memories, notions, and assumptions to their work. These countertransference responses can be both complex and subtle.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'No health professional should fail to address the questions that arise within these pages, or to take heed of the dilemmas and solutions that are described here. I cannot recommend this book highly enough.' - Greta McGough, Nursing Standard "Using end-of-life care as a broad tapestry upon which to work, the authors and their editors have woven together a sequence of chapters about health service and pastoral professionals who work with dying people and their families. They relate attention-riveting personal accounts of professional providers in end-of-life care settings whose experiences reveal countertransference as an ever present dynamic. Renee Katz and Therese Johnson not only have done a thorough job selecting exceptional authors from different

settings but they themselves are also intimately part of the narratives both as solo chapter authors and as co-authors. The stories reveal examples of countertransference with personal poignancy, clarity, and practical resolutions for use. I gratefully acknowledge the editors and authors of *When Professionals Weep* for the increased level of personal awareness I have gained through reading their work. "Katz and Johnson have made a major contribution to the field. The authors represent a wide variety of professional backgrounds and specialty areas. The chapters range from theoretical to the deeply personal. Their attempt to go deeper into themselves and be honest with their personal countertransference experiences will help readers to reflect on their relationships. Using the excellent models to address countertransference in the end of life care, readers may well be able to avoid the experience of compassion fatigue." Mary L.S. Vachon, Ph.D., *Mortality*

Renee S. Katz, PhD, is a licensed psychologist and licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Washington. A board-certified diplomate in clinical social work, she has also chaired the ethics committee of the Association of Death Educators and Counselors (ADEC) and has been an active member in ADEC, the APA and NASW in addition to local organizations in Washington. Therese A. Johnson, LMHC, NCC, has worked in the field of end-of-life care, grief counseling and traumatic loss for twenty years. She currently serves on the End-of-Life Consensus Coalition Committee of the Washington State Medical Association.

This book is a series of articles addressing the dynamic role of professionals in end of life experiences. Of course these professionals include hospice workers and therapists, however physicians and nurses are also part of the psychological task of dying for patients and their families. This book has a strong Freudian and spiritual bend that is consistent throughout the articles by various contributors. Although this approach is not the "latest flavor" of therapeutic technique, I think the concept of countertransference, the reaction of the professional to the emotions of the patient, is a very useful one in this context. In any case, this book delivers badly needed advice to the world of the ICU and the sterilized death. I found it a helpful frame for thoughts on dealing with this most difficult of topics.

This book helps therapists acknowledge and welcome the fact that they can be human and not just a "blank screen" (yes, even for psychodynamic therapists!) when helping terminally ill clients or those dealing with the loss of loved ones. The authors treat this difficult topic with both compassion

and professionalism. Sharon Zigman, M.Ed. Psychologist, Marriage and Family Therapist

After years of being told to buy this book I finally did and cannot understand why it took me so long. This is a book that probes the depths of physician/professional experience. Well written, a must read for anyone wanting to understand what it is like on the other side of the exam table.

Anyone working in hospice MUST read this. Should be required reading for all interns and staff. I can't say enough good things. Great for self care and professional development.

In my experience I have seen little written in depth on the issue of countertransference. As a hospice social worker, it makes me squirm just thinking about how my own countertransference has interfered with effective interventions. "When Professionals Weep" offers specific case examples and analyses which we can apply to ourselves and our work. This book was an eye-opener for me--helping me to become more aware of how I "get in the way" of myself. As people-helping professionals we must keep learning to improve our effectiveness, and this book will help you do just that.

I would like to take chapter by chapter and have the whole agency discuss it. It covers key topics to help prepare professionals in this line of work and to help prevent burnout.

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