

BOOK REVIEW

Otherwise Healthy: A Planner to Focus Your Thoughts on Organizing Life After Being Diagnosed With Breast Cancer

By Lynda G. Shrager, MSW, OTR

At The Pond Publishing, Slingerlands, NY: 2000 \$29.99

Reviewed by JA Greenfield, PhD, RN

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Finding out you have an aggressive, invasive form of breast cancer is devastating enough. Finding it out just hours after you learn that your young daughter is suffering from a severe, chronic gastrointestinal disease is, perhaps, more than one can bear. What can a woman do? How can she keep up with the complex demands of two serious illnesses and still go about the business of living life and meeting its ongoing demands? Like any other woman, Lynda Shrager could not avoid thoughts of doom. Given her daughter's condition, however, she had no choice but to push past them and try to regain some control over her life. Encouraged by her doctor's description of her as an "otherwise healthy" woman, she created a notebook in which to place the copious notes she would write as a tool for not losing track of what needed to be done, by whom, when and, when done, with what results.

Now recovered, she offers this planner – housed in a small but thick three-ring binder – as a means of helping others manage their care. While acknowledging there is no one right way to do so, her workbook provides guidance with respect to essential aspects of this task. Chapter topics include: insurance, medical tests, research, medical history, second opinions, support, doctor visits, lab results, treatment, medications, and more. Readers will find that each chapter contains brief discussions of key tasks followed by forms for recording necessary and helpful information.

In addition to managing her medical condition and the continuing demands of family life, however, a woman with breast cancer must also focus on recovering. Clearly, some help will be needed. Women with breast cancer are not, nor should they ever expect to be, superwomen. Recognizing this, the planner also has chapters on organizing help from others and organizing coverage for kids. While written for women with breast cancer, however, one cannot help but recognize its value to any patient or family caregiver of a patient. As such, this planner is a gift for which everyone can be thankful! □

Go to <http://www.otherwisehealthy.com/> for more information.