



Life After Encephalitis: A Narrative Approach

Ava Easton

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Encephalitis is a devastating condition whose impact upon people should not be underestimated. It robs people of abilities most of us take for granted, it leaves people without their loved ones, and even in those families where the person affected survives the person they once knew can be dramatically changed.?

Life After Encephalitis provides a unique insight into the experiences of those affected by encephalitis, sharing the rich, perceptive, and often powerful, narratives of survivors and family members. It shows how listening to patient and family narratives can help us to understand how they make sense of what has happened to them, and also help professionals better understand and engage with them in practice. The book will also be useful for considering narratives associated with brain injuries from other causes, for example traumatic brain injury.

Life After Encephalitis will appeal to a wide range of professionals working in rehabilitation settings, and also to and survivors of encephalitis, their families, and carers.

Life After Encephalitis: A Narrative Approach Details

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Shalyndra says

This was a difficult book for me, as an encephalitis survivor.

I feel that this book's primary purpose is to convince people, especially medical professionals, that patient and family narratives are critically important in the diagnosis, recovery, and understanding of disease and especially this disease that attacks our sense of self. It is written for an audience that reads research articles regularly and is heavily peppered with citations and summaries. If, like me, you already accept that premise, then you might find the book exhausting; I was hoping to find a much broader sampling of patient stories. I found I had to take frequent breaks from reading as the stories made me very sad because this is a very serious disease and I am lucky to be alive and have the level of functioning I have even though it is not where I want to be. As a patient I find more support and a larger variety of stories online.

I should also point out that if, like me, you are an encephalitis survivor who struggles with language processing, the chapters are very succinct and refer back to each other clearly so I did not get as lost as I do with other books. There are bulleted chapter summaries at the end of each section which were very helpful even though as I said I was frustrated because the tone of the book was very sad and I felt a lot of 'preaching to the choir'.

I do, however, think this is a very important and well-researched book that is not very long and successfully makes the case to the people who most need to listen. Doctors, listen to your patients. I might have not lost ten years of my life if a few of my doctors had read this book in medical school. I wish this was required reading for mental health professionals as well.

James Banzer says

I jumped at the chance to read Life After Encephalitis: A Narrative Approach. Upon delving into the book by Dr. Ava Easton, I was surprised to learn that many people are not familiar with this horrible disease. As a child I learned about the disease and its severity. My mother spoke of a woman with encephalitis who lived very close to our Kansas home. The little that I learned about this malady more than 60 decades ago was all I knew of it.

My mother called it sleeping sickness, and said those who suffer from it go into long periods of unconsciousness. I've learned from the Easton book that this definition which I heard more than 60 decades ago is pretty much spot on. Months of lying comatose are indeed common among those who contract the ailment. What I did not learn in detail from my mother were many of the specific facts about how the illness alters lives. But I know now that mother was much aware of its horrible nature.

Thanks to this book I've learned that those who have had encephalitis experience a great amount of memory impairment. It can leave a person unable to recognize those close to them following hospitalization. It strikes some 4.5 million people globally per year, some of whom eventually experience remarkable recovery. It proves fatal for others.

This book requires some forced attention if you are not closely tied to someone with encephalitis or if you are not a medical professional. Some of it will greatly benefit those associated with the healing arts while

being difficult for others to follow. If you stay with it from start to finish, you'll learn a lot about a disease you may have not known about.
