Compassionate Person-Centered Care for the Dying by Bonnie Freeman (Springer) was recently published for a target audience of clinical nurses. Dr. Freeman was motivated to write the book because of her family experiences when her mother was dying and the years she has spent providing care as an adult nurse practitioner. She works at The City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, California, where she has had the opportunity to be involved with symptom management of many chronically and terminally ill individuals diagnosed with various kinds of cancer.

The book presents the CARES Tool in-depth and provides excellent detail about the application of the tool in practice. This resource was designed by Dr. Freeman during her doctoral work to address the needs of nurses to have the necessary knowledge and skill to care for the dying. It was specifically designed for use by the clinical nurses at the bedside to support their interaction with individuals who are dying and the family members.

Written in a very accessible style, the book provides in-depth content on many of the challenging areas of care for the dying person: symptom management, compassionate communication, establishing goals of care, inspiring hope, emotional and spiritual care, and being an advocate. It provides a clearly defined plan that can be individualized for each patient and tailored to specific family needs, and facilitates caring for the dying in the most respectful and humane way possible. Not only does Dr. Freeman see access to palliative care as a human right, but she advocates for establishing the delivery of palliative care as an acute event (and, thus, assignment of all the urgency, care, and resources that would accompany other acute medical and surgical episodes or events).

There is also an excellent chapter on self-care for the nurse, as this work can be draining upon the professional, as well. Throughout, there are stories of patient situations and how nurses provided support and care in compassionate ways. Overall, the book provides realistic and achievable evidence-based methods for incorporating compassionate and humanistic care of the dying into current standards of practice.

Additionally, two chapters were written by Canadian nurses. One of these chapters focuses on the experience Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre has lived through, as an institution, in using the CARES Tool, and was written by Tracey DasGupta. The other focuses on implementing practice change in clinical settings and is written by Margaret Fitch. Both chapters can be useful to other hospital settings where the introduction of the CARES Tool (or even introducing a palliative care approach generally across an organization) is proposed.