



**Suffering Narratives of Older Adults: A
Phenomenological Approach to Serious Illness,
Chronic Pain, Recovery and Maternal Care
(Routledge Advances in the Medical Humanities)**

Mary Beth Quaranta Morrissey

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In *Suffering Narratives of Older Adults*, Mary Beth Quaranta Morrissey turns to the traditions of phenomenology, humanistic psychology and social work to provide an in-depth exploration of the deep structure of the suffering experience. She draws upon the notion of maternal holding to develop an original construct of *maternal affordances* – the ground of possibility for human development, agency and relational practices. The conceptual analysis is based on the life narratives of several elders receiving chronic care in facility environments.

Creating new fields of communication for patients, their family members and health professionals in processes of reflection and shared decision making, this book builds on knowledge about suffering to help guide ethical action in preventing and relieving chronic pain and improving systems of care. It offers a phenomenological approach to understanding the maternal as a primary domain of moral experience in serious illness and suffering, and implications for policy, practice and research. A series of applied chapters, looking at individual experiences of suffering and care experiences, present critical areas of ethical inquiry, including:

- pain and suffering
- maternal relational ethics
- evaluation and moral deliberation about care options
- decision-making and moral agency
- end-of-life experiences of care.

Exploring how an ecological relational perspective grounded in phenomenology may provide fruitful alternatives to traditional frameworks in bioethics, this is an important contribution to the ongoing development of an ecological ethic of care. It will be of interest to scholars and students of bioethics and phenomenological methods in the health and human services, as well as practitioners in the field.

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