The book addresses the most current ISPN and APNA competencies and presents content designed to foster self-growth, and critical thinking and decision-making skills, as well as to implement therapeutic interventions. It offers an overview of theories of mental illness and a detailed discussion of commonly seen psychiatric disorders, and addresses mental health care settings across the lifespan and different populations. Clinical case studies and first-hand accounts vividly describe the realities of living with specific mental illnesses, "What would you do?" questions stimulate discussions, and sample and practice care plans for chronic mental illness facilitate integration of concepts into practice.

Evidence-based practice summaries from psychiatric nursing and related research literature are included, and DSM-IV and NANDA guidelines are integrated throughout.