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"Dignity is a part of the human experience that surfaces when we feel most valued, as well as when we feel violated. . . . Jacobson weaves together the voices of those interviewed into a vibrant picture that stimulates thought and potentially social action to increase the responsiveness of social and health institutions to respect the human rights of those they serve. This is a must-read for anyone who provides social or health services, as well as for anyone who cares about the dignity of those who receive such services."

—*Donna M. Mertens, Gallaudet University, author of Transformative Research and Evaluation*

How dignity violation and dignity promotion affect individual and collective health

Dignity and Health

NORA JACOBSON

In these hard times of global financial peril and growing social inequality, injuries to dignity are pervasive. "Indignity has many faces," one man told Nora Jacobson as she conducted interviews for this book. Its expressions range from rudeness, indifference, and condescension to objectification, discrimination, and exploitation. Yet dignity can also be promoted. Another man described it as "common respect," suggesting dignity's ordinariness, and the ways we can create and share it through practices like courtesy, leveling, and contribution.

Dignity and Health examines the processes and structures of dignity violation

and promotion, traces their consequences for individual and collective health, and uses the model developed to imagine how we might reform our systems of health and social care.

With its focus on the dignity experiences of those often excluded from the mainstream—people who are poor, or homeless, or dealing with mental health problems—as well as on vulnerabilities like age or sickness or unemployment that threaten to make us all feel "less than," *Dignity and Health* recognizes dignity as a moral matter embedded in the choices we make every day.



Nora Jacobson is the author of *In Recovery: The Making of Mental Health Policy*, also published by Vanderbilt, and *Cleavage: Technology, Controversy, and the Ironies of the Man-Made Breast*.



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