

Human rights violations in medicine: a-to-z action guide by Dr. Pamela Wible

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To organize work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-racking for the worker would be little short of criminal; it would indicate a greater concern with goods than with people, an evil lack of compassion and a soul-destroying degree of attachment to the most primitive side of this worldly existence.

E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*

And don't make the mistake of calling us resilient. To not have been destroyed, to not have given up, to have survived, is no badge of honor. Would you call an attempted murder victim resilient?

Tommy Orange, *There There*

Dr. Pamela Wible's latest book, *Human Rights Violations in Medicine: A-to-Z Action Guide*, expands upon her ground-breaking work in physician and medical student suicide prevention,¹⁻⁴ elucidating the systematically normalized circumstances that erode physician and medical student mental health. In it, Wible details a step-by-step guide to:

1. Reframing the abuses heaped upon physicians and medical students as violations of innate human rights;
2. Labeling each violation in clear and concise language;
3. Documenting each violation in a fastidious manner that supports legal action, should it be required;
4. Reporting each violation to the appropriate personnel in order to deter further violations and safe-guard against retaliation; and
5. Supporting those who have suffered violations so they may heal and continue their vital work in the medical profession.

The cover of the book lists some of the most common human rights violations in medicine: food and water deprivation, punishment when sick, sleep deprivation, bullying, pimping, harassment, racism, violence, and sexism. Reading those words on the cover made me cringe and swallow hard. Suddenly, I heard echoes from my years in training and practice. *This is just the way it is. If we don't toughen you up, you'll never survive in this career. Suck it up. Do you know how many people would kill to be where you are? If you can't hack it, there's the door.* Even years after the fact, those voices linger. Had I received Dr. Wible's advice during my years in medical school, residency, or medical practice, my personal experience with human rights violations in medicine - née burnout,^{5,6} née system-induced distress⁷ - might have ended differently. Perhaps it still can.

Wible's book and her mission fill me with hope: hope that we can eradicate human rights violations from this career that I love; hope that we can direct the compassionate care we show our patients toward medical students, residents, physician colleagues, and ourselves; and hope that we can shatter the stigma surrounding mental health diagnoses and prioritize mental healthcare for all. Join me in hope. Join me in recommending *Human Rights Violations in Medicine: A-to-Z Action Guide, The Ultimate Manual for Physician & Medical Student Self-Defense*.

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