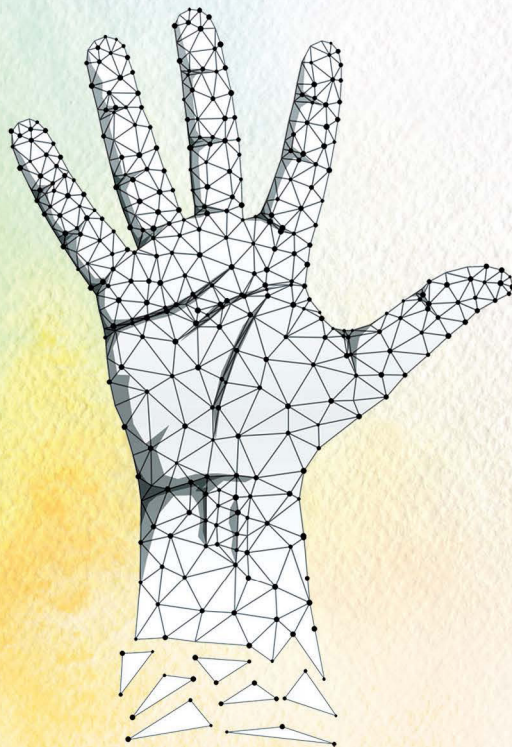


Professional Reasoning in Healthcare

Navigating Uncertainty Using
the Five Finger Framework



Edited by **Helen Jeffery** • **Linda Robertson**
Jan Hendrik Roodt • **Susan Ryan**

WILEY Blackwell

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Linda Robertson, PhD has been involved in occupational therapy education for about 40 years in Scotland and New Zealand and has a special interest in professional reasoning. She has researched in the area and edited a textbook: *Clinical Reasoning in Occupational Therapy, Controversies in Practice* (2012). In 2021, Linda was awarded the NZ Order of Merit for services to occupational therapy and services to seniors.

Jan Hendrik Roodt, PhD (EngSc) ([linkedin.com/in/drjanroodt](https://www.linkedin.com/in/drjanroodt)) is an experienced practitioner and academic specializing in technology business establishment and management, and he contributes actively to diverse industrial and agricultural projects. Jan Hendrik also supervises post-graduate students at the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, Te Pūkenga. Affiliated with professional organizations, he serves as a project and publication reviewer, as well as a journal editor.

Susan Ryan, PhD is Emerita Professor of University College Cork, Ireland. She has extensive experience in professional reasoning development and adult learning theories. She has co-authored textbooks on practice education and reasoning using narratives. She supervises qualitative research for Irish students with a focus on dementia care in Ireland.

Foreword

Dr Linda Robertson and I have had a long-distance “academic romance” for many years. It started in the 1990s when I was transitioning from being an occupational therapy and rehabilitation administrator to engaging in my doctoral work on clinical reasoning. My long-standing motivation for being in healthcare management was to support clinicians so that they in turn could provide the best care to our clients. After over twenty years in the field, I was inspired by the fascinating work of Mattingly and Fleming (1994), as their findings seemed to hold the key to a whole new understanding of how to promote effective professional reasoning and thus better practice. By then, Dr Robertson was already engaged in academics and following the same work. She, along with several of her colleagues, continued to advance our understanding of what we now call professional reasoning. I am so pleased they joined to offer this new text: *Professional Reasoning in Healthcare: Navigating Uncertainty using the Five Finger Framework* edited by Jeffery, Roodt, Robertson, and Ryan. I am honored to introduce this important new contribution, as they make the leap from *understanding* professional reasoning to *improving* professional reasoning.

My overriding emotion while reading this new text is one of gratitude. So let me start by saying thank you. Thanks for synthesizing the many things we know about professional reasoning into a very practical and digestible resource. Thanks for working with the complexity to offer real, concrete, and doable approaches for improving professional reasoning. Thanks for making your suggestions both profound and easy to read. Thanks for using real stories of real practitioners to show how this works in practice. Thanks for broadening the views on client and culture. Thanks for opening new horizons for research to improve practice. In short, thanks for “handing us” the five-finger framework. It will work for students, it will work for practitioners, it will work for educators, and it will work for scholars. Well done.

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REFERENCE

Mattingly, C., & Fleming, M. H. (1994). *Clinical reasoning – forms of inquiry in a therapeutic practice*. F.A. Davis.

Preface

This book, written for practitioners, students, and educators, is a response to changes in society's expectations of health professionals and the impact on delivery of services. Traditionally, specialization was the hallmark of the expert. However, in the current world of complex practice, professionals require systems-level thinking where it is the generalist who becomes the "artful master." In order to thrive in a world that demands constant change where there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer (the so-called "wicked" problems), strong frameworks are needed for decision making.

In response to this acknowledged threat to "practice as usual," a framework has been developed that will impact on reasoning and assist professionals to work effectively in the current working environment. This has been named the Five Finger Framework (FFF) and provides a simple structure to guide complex thinking. Essentially, it encourages the use of evidence from a diverse range of sources to inform decisions and stimulates a questioning approach. It uses the metaphor of the hand to stimulate complicated critical thinking: the fingers trigger the reader to explore research-based literature, the environment where the practice is situated, the client/family, the expertise of others, and what is integral to the self. The FFF has the potential to stimulate habitual scrutiny of multiple sources of information and viewpoints in a straightforward way to provide an awareness of the problem solver's situation. From this awareness, anticipatory thinking

can be encouraged to ensure that a range of possible contributory factors are considered and helpful solutions generated. The FFF provides a structure that enhances both the visibility and traceability of thinking.

This book is written using narratives – each of the fingers on the framework is portrayed in a chapter written in the first person as a story from the perspective of a health practitioner. Story telling enables natural engagement with content and enhances focus on and motivation for the reading. The stories provide the reader with a way to imagine the situation and the professional reasoning that is informing the practitioner's response. Importantly, the nonlinear reality of professional reasoning processes and the messiness of everyday practice are illustrated. Despite the narrative nature of the writing style making the chapters potentially an "easy read," theory is integrated and the complexity integral to reasoning processes and decision making is made evident. The writing style further enhances the visibility of thinking provided in the Five Finger Framework.

Both the FFF itself and how it is described, justified, and illustrated in this text are fundamentally based on the concept of situated learning. This learning theory follows a premise that knowledge and resultant action are uniquely formed by individuals in direct response to their situation, environment, and the people they interact with. Each of the chapters related to the fingers brings to life how learning is situated, and the power of

reflexivity in deepening and strengthening the impact of learning.

For readers looking for the rigorous underpinnings of the work, the theoretical and practical motivators for the FFF are covered in some detail in Chapter 2. The situated and reflexive practice in fields spanning several disciplines is discussed

with a focus on reflective thinking skills, transformative learning, and sense making. Chapter 8 covers the increasing need for transdisciplinary thinking in these fields and introduces a complexity-based view on ethics and values. The final chapter contains tools and tips for using this book in practice and in an educational setting.

Acknowledgments

Our belief is that professional reasoning is fundamental to the quality of health service provision. This contribution to literature in professional reasoning is the culmination of effort on the part of many. It represents not only our own research, but a drawing from and synthesis of theory and discourse from other academics. We commend and are grateful for all who are working on advancing healthcare practice through deepening and sharing knowledge of professional reasoning.

We would like to acknowledge the willing sharing of ideas, opinions, and practices from clinicians, lecturers, and students in our own research. The basis of the Five Finger Framework emerged from those discussions and interviews – thank you for your insights and openness.

Writing in a style that is relaxed and accessible but also portrays complex theories and processes is challenging. We are grateful to the many people from diverse professions and practice areas who were prepared to read chapters through a particular lens.

These included Indigenous practitioners and academics, and those from the disciplines of speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, social work, counseling, and occupational therapy. We also thank Dr Sheena Blair (occupational therapist) whose deep knowledge and sharp mind helped us tighten and tidy the work and reassured us of its value. Special thanks is also due to Professor Barbara Schell for her willingness to immerse herself in the manuscript and write a foreword for the text.

Finally, we acknowledge you, the reader of this text, whether you are an educator, student, practitioner, or manager. Your preparedness to read and ponder how a professional reasoning framework such as this might influence your work and ultimately enhance the outcomes for the people who access your services is commendable.

Helen Jeffery, Linda Robertson,
Jan Hendrik Roodt, Susan Ryan

Praise for *Professional Reasoning in Healthcare: Navigating Uncertainty Using the Five Finger Framework*

An essential tool and a great insight to the decision-making skills that health professionals go through on a daily basis – a must-read for all practitioners, new, and seasoned!

Lara Gallichan, BSc(Hons), Speech and Language Therapist, NZSTA

Written in a clear and accessible manner, there is no doubt this book will be an invaluable resource for students, clinicians, and teachers alike. By providing real-world examples, the reader easily appreciates the value of the Five Finger Framework and how it can improve their professional reasoning and practice. This book should be compulsory reading for all students, and I would highly recommend it to all practicing healthcare workers.

Dr Ruth Jeffery, PhD, MSc, PGDip Med Rad Sci(NM), LLB(Hons), BA, BSc, NZDMI

The ability to critically reflect upon the way that professional reasoning and judgment occurs is pivotal and is profoundly ethical for practice, research, and leadership. Amongst the unique features of this text is the introduction of the Five Finger Framework to assist lifelong learners to comprehensively problem pose and problem solve. This resonates well with situated learning with its focus upon context, interpersonal relationships, and shared decision making.

The book is culturally aware, transdisciplinary, and has the potential to become a

core text for learners at all levels of education, particularly for those within practice-based education and mentorship relationships.

Dr Sheena E.E. Blair, DipOT, MEd, ED, FRCOT

Thanks for offering real, concrete, and doable approaches for improving professional reasoning, using real stories of real practitioners to show how this works in practice, broadening the views on client and culture. In short, thanks for “handing us” the Five Finger Framework. It will work for students, practitioners, educators, and scholars. I would adopt it in a heartbeat if I were still teaching!

Barbara A. Schell, Professor Emerita, School of Occupational Therapy, Brenau University, PhD, OT/L, FAOTA

This internationally relevant text presents the Five Finger Framework as a tool for enabling practice reasoning, critical reflection, and decision making across a range of transdisciplinary approaches in health and social care settings. The metaphor of a hand unfolds a structured process for thinking through many-layered aspects to reach the end goal we all aim for – working effectively, visibly and in a traceable and thus accountable manner for collaborative solution-focused approaches.

Margaret McKenzie, Associate Professor, Registered Social Worker (NZ)

