

A realistic portrayal of nurses

Philly authors offer an informative primer on a career in nursing

IN THIS AGE of reality TV, there surprisingly aren't too many realistic portrayals of nurses on TV, said the authors of the new book, "How to Survive & Maybe Even Love Your Life as a Nurse."

"Nurses on TV are either these stern, matronly women or they're sex-crazed and searching for a doctor to marry," said co-author Staci Smith. "It's not a real balanced look."

Even shows that seem to be accurate representations of the medical community fall short.

"On 'ER,' you'll see the doctor screaming at the nurse, 'Take the blood pressure!'" said co-author Kelli Dunham. "It's ridiculous."

"In 'Boys Don't Cry,' the nurse was on for two to three minutes and showed a compassionate side, a softer hand and skill while treating the patient," Dunham said.

Dunham and Smith hosted a book release party for "How to Survive & Maybe

Check it out

- For more information on "How to Survive & Maybe Even Love Life as a Nurse," check out www.lovelifeasanurse.com.

Even Love Your Life as a Nurse" over the weekend at the Mutter Museum in Philly. Dunham and Smith talked about doctor-nurse relationships.

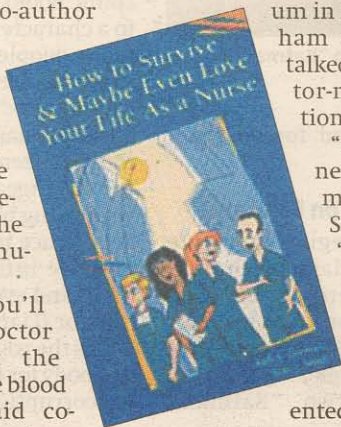
"Doctors need to listen much more," Smith said. "The

approach to the patient must be team oriented. A nurse is

with the patient much more than the doctor, and they'll see small changes in the condition of the patient."

Nursing veterans

Smith, 39, of Philadelphia, is a 21-year nursing vet who is an emergency-room nurse at Graduate Hospital in Philly.



NURSES STACI SMITH, left, and Kelli Dunham are co-authors of "How to Survive & Maybe Even Love Your Life as a Nurse."

Dunham, 36, of Philadelphia, works at the 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University. She is also a stand-up comic and wrote the book "How to Survive and Maybe Even Love Nursing School" about her experiences at Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, which she graduated from in 1998.

After two printings, the publisher, FA Davis, wanted a sequel, so Dunham enlist-

ed the help of Smith in the project.

The result is a fun and informative primer on nursing, with chapters on everything from beginning a new job to managing finances.

"It's not an easy job, and it's not a fun ride — I've been a nurse for 21 years — but you take great pride in being a professional," Smith said. "There's unbelievable satisfaction in saving a life."

CHRIS JORDAN

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