ELISABETH LIEDSTRÖM has worked as a registered nurse in different fields, mostly in women's health and infection treatment. She has worked as a registered midwife, mostly in the maternity care. During the last several years she has been a lecturer, employed at the School of Health and Medical Science at the Örebro University, mostly working with the midwifery and nursing programs. A few years ago she graduated a Medicine Licentiate degree and has now continued her studies as a doctoral student at the Department of Health Sciences at the Örebro University.

The overall aim of the present thesis was to describe and further explore the life situation of the next of kin to persons who are long-term ill, disabled, and/or older, and in need of care. The approach was multiple methods, and the design was descriptive, correlative, and explorative. The results showed that the next of kin experienced in general a good quality of life, despite their experiences of high burden and chronic sorrow. Honest and specific communication between the health care personnel, the next of kin, and the care receiver are necessary. Good care can only be delivered where there is a triadic relationship. Love and obligations were two anchor points on a continuum, which described how the next of kin presented their relationship to the ill/disabled person. The relationship with the health care personnel was described through cooperation and obligations. The balance or imbalance in the different relations affected the next of kin's life situation in several ways. Good communication was seen as the key to balance in the relationships with others. One possibility to achieve symmetrical communications is to adapt the Partnership Model, as a tool for creating good relationships.