

Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Pedersen, P. B., Draguns, J. G., Lonner, W. J., & Trimble, J. E. (Eds.) (2008). *Counseling across cultures* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN 978-1-4129-2739-0 (softcover), 462 pages.

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Counseling Across Cultures is a comprehensive and sophisticated guide for applying a culturally diverse perspective to counselling psychology. This edited volume's goal is to provide both breadth and depth on cultural diversity in order to increase practitioners' awareness and knowledge of the role of culture and ethnicity in psychotherapy and the use of culturally sensitive interventions. The rich content of this text reflects the many years that editors Paul Pedersen, Juris Draguns, Walter Lonner, and Joseph Trimble have spent in the field of ethnic and cultural psychology as researchers, practitioners, educators, visiting scholars, and world travellers. This substantial text is organized into five parts, addressing both common and specific issues in cross-cultural counselling, including competencies and gender issues in multicultural counselling.

The 24 chapters range from 14 to 22 pages in length except for the shorter introductory chapter, which highlights the applicability and utility of a culture-centred perspective in counselling psychology. Chapters 1 to 5 (Part I) provide a foundation for the remainder of the book. They examine benefits of a multicultural perspective, professional ethics and issues, individual and group differences, and assessment strategies in multicultural contexts. In these chapters, emphasis is placed on demonstrating professional excellence in counselling through assessing the psychotherapy process, accommodating cultural practices and services in psychotherapy (e.g., rituals, translators), advocating for ethnic minority clients as needed, and bridging cross-counselling research and practice. The reader is shown how ethnicity and culture may shape a client's unique worldview and sense of self and group identity.

Chapters 6 to 10 (Part II) explore the interface of counselling and ethnocultural contexts. They examine presenting problems, needs, issues, and appropriate treatment approaches and strategies for working with ethnically and culturally diverse populations. The reader learns strategies for making choices that reflect cultural sensitivity when counselling in order to help ethnic minority clients explore and resolve culturally relevant issues such as historical trauma.

Chapters 11 to 15 (Part III) review demographics, affiliations, and group differences that often become salient in psychotherapy. They examine diversity issues such as gender, age, sexual orientation, and marginalization. The reader is shown that acknowledging similarities and differences that exist between the practitioner and the client can serve as a starting point in psychotherapy. Practitioners are cautioned not to assume that their clients' ethnic/cultural background is necessarily related to their presenting problem(s) but that it may constitute an important area of consideration and inquiry.

Chapters 16 to 19 (Part IV) describe problems encountered by persons relocating

to North America or surviving major disasters. Acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, enculturation, and trauma processes may differ from one individual to another and require that interventions and strategies be tailored to their unique experiences. They examine in detail presenting problems of specific groups—international students, refugees, migrants, and survivors/witnesses of major disasters—and interventions and strategies that may be most effective with each group. The reader will acquire an appreciation of the complexity and specificity of presenting problems in these different client groups (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics), and learn how to tailor treatment interventions.

Chapters 20 to 24 (Part V) present special concerns in culturally informed counselling. They examine religion and spirituality as counselling resources, culturally sensitive strategies for treating drug and alcohol abuse, use of a multiethnic perspective in health psychology, and the role of family when counselling ethnic minority clients. In these chapters, readers are encouraged to broaden their understanding of multiculturalism to include these factors and perspectives.

This is a well-written book that offers a thought-provoking and thorough examination of ethnic and cultural diversity in psychotherapy. It occasionally uses jargon but otherwise presents information in a clear, concise, and detailed fashion. The chapters build on one another, providing a progressive and comprehensive overview of counselling theory, research, and practice with a focus on ethnicity and culture. The book asks the reader to consider cultural meanings in case conceptualization, treatment formulation, implementation, and outcome. I found the “Critical Incident” and “Discussion Questions” sections at the end of each chapter one of the most valuable aspects of this text. These case vignettes and questions illustrate key points of the chapter at the case level and, more importantly, the benefits of a multicultural perspective in counselling. The impressive reference lists at the end of each chapter are useful resources.

A distinguishing aspect of this book is that multiculturalism is critically analyzed at sociocultural, interpersonal, and individual levels, and balanced with theory and research in order to enrich the reader's knowledge. Its major strength lies in its coverage of topics and areas in breadth and depth, and the considerable expertise represented, both geographically and disciplinarily. Existing theory and research are critiqued, and gaps in the literature are revealed. Arguments are supported by the latest empirical research from a variety of disciplines, notably psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

Counseling Across Cultures presents many issues that are crucial to the work of counsellors, and it does so in a way that conveys respect for their intelligence, professional training and experience, and interest in cross-cultural counselling. This book may be of benefit to counsellors who want to expand their helping repertoires by thinking critically about the role of ethnicity and culture in psychotherapy and translating this into action. The scope of topics and areas presented makes this text useful for counsellor education, research, and practice.

Despite its many strengths, the book has some notable limitations. One drawback is there is no concluding chapter summarizing the chapters. Given the comprehensive-

ness of this book, the inclusion of a final summary chapter would permit the reader to go away with a clear understanding of what it means to adopt a culture-centred perspective in counselling psychology. Another drawback is the failure to identify or discuss risks or limitations of culture-centred interventions or strategies (e.g., contraindications of drawing attention to differences between the practitioner and client). The benefits of a culture-centred approach are overstated to the extent that the reader is left wondering if there are any shortcomings of a culture-centred perspective in counselling. A final drawback is the lack of empirical support for some of the culture-centred interventions and strategies presented, for instance, in assessing the relevance of the spiritual domains in the client's therapeutic issues. Presenting evidence on the therapeutic applicability and utility of these interventions and strategies would appeal to practitioners who typically use empirically supported treatments (ESTs), encouraging them to consider using them in their clinical work.

Overall, *Counseling Across Cultures* represents an excellent step toward a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural counselling. Clearly, the editors accomplish their goal for this book. This text is a welcome addition to the current literature because it offers a refreshing contextual analysis of counselling with its emphasis on ethnicity and culture. This book would be of interest to researchers, practitioners, educators, and students who seek to develop or refine their knowledge and skills in cross-cultural counselling.