

spiritual dimensions of one's experience as much as we value and honour the behavioural and intellectual approaches to understanding human experience.

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Weaver, John D. (1995). *Disasters: Mental Health Interventions*. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press, 204 pp.

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*Reviewed by:* Monty Nelson, University of Alberta.

This book is targeted towards novices or veterans in the area of disaster mental health (DMH). Written by an author with a strong passion for working in DMH, the book is designed as a "practical overview of the DMH field and the many opportunities it offers to those who are willing to . . . assist others in times of disasters." This book covers many topics, yet attempts to do so in a manner that does not overwhelm the reader. However, this approach encounters some substantial difficulties with structure, form, and content, which render the book a frustrating experience to read.

Weaver is a Master's level clinical social worker, therapist, and trainer who specializes in crisis intervention services and risk management. Based out of Pennsylvania, he has been an active volunteer with the American Red Cross, having assisted at several local and national disasters including the Mississippi River/Midwest floods of 1993, as well as the 1994 crash of USAir Flight 427. This book is his fourth publication.

Weaver covers topics regarding large-scale levels of disaster management, and organization of national and local bodies such as the American Red Cross. The book also covers micro-level disaster management skills such as the details of the helping process and understanding psychological reactions to disasters.

Although replete with information on how to deal with crisis scenarios, this book has several drawbacks. First, components of the book are written strictly regarding the American Red Cross policies, procedures, regulations, and paperwork in crisis situations. References are made to several American disasters and how they were dealt with by the author and the American Red Cross. Readers not residing in the U.S. may question the book's utility because much of the information regarding phone numbers to use, agencies responsible for certain tasks, or policies for dealing with situations may not apply. One may find greater benefit by contacting local municipal offices and gathering relevant information directly from them rather than reading this book.

Secondly, Weaver's attempt to provide a clear presentation of material seems to result in a book that is filled with lists. Not all of these lists are of questionable utility, and the vast majority of the lists within this book are confusing and lengthy combinations of points to remember. Many of the lists have up to 21 items of supposed "key" tips, including some items that seem to be out of place. In addition, it is often unclear whether a particular list is the author's ideas, or if it was gleaned from another source.

Further to these difficulties with clarity, this book is filled with acronyms and abbreviations. Perhaps it would have been better to remain with the long version of the names or titles for the first few usages, particularly if the reader never sees the title used again throughout the book.

However, it was appreciated that this book was intended to be written in plain language for the reader. Although the author targeted this book for a graduate-level trained audience of mental health professionals, he nonetheless relates many personal examples and uses colloquial language. However, while this style was refreshing, it is unfortunate that it was combined with confusing structural problems in the writing. For example, transitions that lead into the presentation of a list are often unclear and choppy, and sometimes lists appear "out of nowhere" and for no apparent reason. In addition, many chapters end with examples or stories whose summarizing functions are often unclear. In addition to these difficulties, Weaver presents an inadequate discussion of several topic areas, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Mental Status Examinations. These areas were discussed in very cursory detail, rendering them uninformative and potentially misleading for the reader without other knowledge of these areas.

Readers who are interested in pursuing their interest in DMH may be much better off directly discussing the opportunities and information that are available through their local Canadian Red Cross. Furthermore, substantial difficulties with the structure, organization, and clarity of this book may prove to be additionally frustrating for the reader. In sum, the reader may be best to avoid this book.

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Kotter, J. (1995). *Growing a Therapist*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 215 pp.

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*Reviewed by:* Denise J. Larsen, University of Alberta.

At great personal risk, Jeffrey Kottler has revealed his experience as counselor in *Growing a Therapist*. In his book, this well-known author reveals both his insecurities about his professional abilities in addition to his satisfaction and joy in helping others. *Growing a Therapist* represents a daring attempt to communicate uncertainties about his own practice as well as his sense of isolation as a therapist. Like other material authored by Kottler, the book is easy to read, personable, almost conversational in its approach. A recent literature search indicates that few recent psychotherapist autobiographies exist. Kottler provides a valuable contribution to the field and this work is a rare offering in books of this nature.

*Growing a Therapist* covers many issues which other therapists may recognize in themselves both personally and professionally. Kottler shares his experiences of being a child, a student, a neophyte counsellor, a father, an experienced therapist, and a teacher. From each of these vantage points, Kottler reflects how these experiences influenced his therapy and himself.