
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Hanna, S.J. and Brown, J.H. (1999) *The Practice of Family Therapy: Key Elements Across Models*. (2nd Edition) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company

Reviewed by: Kathy Hubley Carruthers, M.Sc., Ph.D Student

The Practice of Family Therapy: Key Elements Across Models is written as a guide for new helping professionals as they make the transition from individual therapy to working with couples and families. The majority of the text focuses on the similarities between and complementary nature of family therapy models, offering suggestions to the reader on integrating the unique contributions of each model in building a "systems/relational" theory and method of practice. Each stage of the therapeutic process is outlined, starting with the referral, and ending with the conduction of follow-up evaluations. In doing so, the authors provide a wide range of useful suggestions to beginning practitioners and ground these suggestions in theory and case examples.

Part I of the book begins with a brief history of the field of family therapy and then reviews the diversity within the field on the basis of a specific case. The authors then examine the family context from the perspective of gender, race/culture, intergenerational relationships, transitions and development, structure, and individual experience. Finally, they outline a review of the common elements, sequences and interactions in an integrated practice, in terms of knowledge and concepts, perceptions and attitudes, and behaviors. Although not as well organized nor grounded in specific examples as other parts of the book, Part I provides a useful overview of the basic elements of practice. In addition, it helps to clarify the logical evolution of the therapy process, from referral to evaluation.

The book's second section, focused on the structural and experiential skills common to a variety of models, is the most practical and well articulated. It offers specific suggestions for facilitating a referral, completing an intake interview, and formulating hypotheses. Further, Part II focuses on the initial interview as a means of providing structure to the therapy process and points to appropriate methods of joining, problem definition, interaction, goal setting, and contract development. Perhaps the greatest strength of Part II is its reference to specific assessment means such as genograms and the tracking of interaction and longitudinal sequences, including how these techniques can be generalized across models. Unfortunately however, because the book largely omits postmodern (i.e. solution focused, narrative, and feminist poststructuralist) approaches, minimal attention is paid to the therapeutic conversation, including forms of questioning, as vehicles for gathering information within the family therapy context.

The final section of the book provides the reader with the skills necessary to facilitate and maintain relational and systemic change within an integrated therapy context. This section contains a wealth of suggestions for facilitating the change

process in a way that gives credence to the families' own strengths and unique contributions. Specific examples and meticulous organizational style further enhance this section. As Part III draws to a close, the authors outline a variety of case reviews in order to contrast ways in which basic skills can be implemented. The result is a chapter that serves to integrate all aspects of the book for the reader and stir excitement in entering into the hands-on process of family therapy.

Overall, *The Practice of Family Therapy* provides a foundation for the beginning therapist to develop in further practice. Although it does not place much focus on the postmodern approaches, it does provide a good foundation for the dominant systemic traditions. Suzanne Hanna and Joseph Brown have been successful not only in helping the beginning therapist make the necessary bridge between theory and practice but in making concrete and accessible the basic elements of the counseling profession. *The Practice of Family Therapy: Key Elements Across Models* is a terrific resource for any beginning clinician.

Poindexter, C. C., Valentine, D., & Conway, P. (1999). *Essential Skills for Human Services*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Reviewed by: Daryn Kemp, B.A., M.Sc.(cand)

Essential Skills for Human Services is an introductory text for beginning helpers which presents many of the issues encountered in the helping professions. The first section, "Laying the Groundwork," introduces the beginning helper to the concept of help, to underlying values or help-giving, and to an awareness of self and others. Within the first section, Chapter 2 looks at the role of helper attitudes and values, while Chapter 3 focuses on the importance of cultural awareness in the helping relationship.

The second section, "Foundations for Helping," further explores the helping relationship, use of self, communication and interviewing, and principles and techniques of active listening, crisis intervention, and problem solving. In particular, an entire chapter is devoted to active listening. Chapter 6 focuses on other helping skills such as empowerment, informed choice, and accentuation of strengths, while Chapter 7 deals with crisis intervention, and provides a great deal of information on suicide.

Case management and community organizing helping models are presented in the third section in order to familiarize readers with the system processes and relationships. The important theme of advocacy is central to the section.

Specific situations are addressed in the fourth section. For example, chapter 11 is dedicated to the issue of violence in relationships and families, while subsequent chapters discuss special populations, such as persons who are elderly, persons with HIV, or persons with developmental disabilities. Chapter 14 provides a brief introduction to, and explanation of, mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder,