
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Wexler, D. B. (1991). *The adolescent self: Strategies for self-management, self-soothing, and self-esteem in adolescents*. New York: W. W. Norton, 183 pp., \$45.00 Cdn.

Reviewed by: Wes Miller, Ph.D. student, University of Alberta.

In *The Adolescent Self*, David Wexler seeks to address an oft-felt frustration in working with adolescents by presenting a treatment philosophy and methodology, attendant with practical techniques, to engage "troubled" teenagers in creative ways. Using his experiences in developing a short-term hospital program, the author outlines a 16-session treatment model for adolescents, entitled PRISM—Program for Innovative Self-Management.

PRISM, the author contends, is a comprehensive treatment program for teenagers "designed to foster the essential building blocks of the adolescent sense of self: self-management, self-soothing, and self-esteem" (p. 3). The guiding philosophy throughout the program emerges from Heinz Kohut's self-psychology: most behaviour represents the individual's attempt to cope with anxiety and maintain a cohesive sense of self. These behaviour patterns, bizarre or self-destructive as they appear, actually reflect attempts to rebalance or protect the fragile self. David Wexler writes "our approach is to recognize central developmental issues, primarily from the vantage point of Kohut's self-psychology, and then design interventions—any interventions—to advance self-cohesion and development" (p. 28). The interventions are largely drawn from the hypnotic techniques of Milton Erickson and the cognitive therapy of Aaron Beck.

The book itself is clearly organized and well-presented. Part One addresses foundational issues of program philosophy and structure. It proceeds with a succinct presentation of the theoretical presuppositions behind self-management psychology and concludes with a brief discussion of adolescence, largely from a developmental perspective. The substance of the book is, as promised, a "how-to" manual and Part Two articulates the specific session-by-session programming. The overall goal is to instill four central skills: self-talk, assertiveness, body control, and visualization for self-cohesion. Each session features a teaching component, an individual or group activity, and finally, a relaxation/visualization exercise. Strategies for visualization, self-hypnosis, stress inoculation, cognitive restructuring, assertiveness training and psychodrama are described in detail. Part Three presents six brief case studies of individuals who have been helped through treatment in the PRISM program.

While the author claims that the distinctive features of the program are its organization, stimulation, specificity, responsibility enhancement, and multi-dimensionality (pp. 5-6), there appears to be little new thinking in the approach—simply the organization of a variety of interventions in a structured format. Some may be distressed over the seemingly haphazard integration of divergent techniques, without regard for the underlying theoretical

considerations. It is not certain that Kohut, Beck, and Erickson, the author's mentors, would recognize, or approve, of this hybrid application of their thinking and methods.

While the book is recommended for anyone trying to understand and deal with adolescents, professionals and parents alike, it seems best suited for clinicians and members of the helping community who have some interest and experience in guided imagery or self-hypnosis. The program itself, as presented, is labour intensive; the author's hospital treatment team involved at least 10 professionals. Finally, since the writing style is simple and concise, it is easily understood by a wide readership; however, a serious researcher may be disappointed over the lack of technical discussion and supporting data. At the very least, a description of the limitations of the program and success or recidivism rates would have been helpful.

In summary, *The Adolescent Self* provides a specific, easy-to-comprehend practical treatment program designed to foster the development of the adolescent sense of self. This book bears serious consideration for those professionals seeking a brief, structured program with an emphasis on self-psychology. The book would make an excellent supplement to a practicum course in counselling adolescents. A companion workbook, offering instructions and materials for each session, is also available.

Schumaker, John F., Ed. (1992). *Religion and Mental Health*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 320 pp., \$65.50 Cdn. (Hardcover).

Reviewed by: Bill Hague, Professor, University of Alberta.

Like most edited collections, Schumaker's ambitious volume takes a variety of articles related to facets of an announced theme, organizes them in some rational way, leaving them for interested readers to pick over, selecting what is of interest to them. A brief outline of this organization may help evaluate this work.

Schumacker has organized the twenty-four chapters into four sections: I Historical Perspectives, II Affective and Cognitive Consequences, III Psychosocial Dimensions, IV Cross-Cultural Perspectives. The theme, as one can see, is abstract and scholarly; the range of topics is wide, but Schumacker has, in the usual style of an edited volume, summarized them well, and (even better) prefaced this summary with a review of highpoints in the study of the relationship of religion and mental health from Allport in the fifties to research published in the nineties. It is the kind of overview a graduate student would cherish as background and perspective.

The articles that follow are written by authors largely from a North American or an Australian context, generally by authors not in the forefront. They cover topics such as "Religion and the Mental Health of Women," "The Mental Health Consequences of Irreligion," "Religiosity Depression and Suicide," "Religion, Anxiety and Fear of Death," "Religion and Self-