
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Okun, B.F. (1990). *Seeking connections in psychotherapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Barbara F. Okun, Ph.D., is training director of the graduate program in counselling psychology at Northeastern University, and her areas of specialization include family systems therapy, adult development and behavioural medicine.

The main purpose of the book is to provide an updated overview of four major families of psychotherapy: psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, existential-humanistic, and systems therapies. There are two important related purposes. One is to look at these four families from a feminist perspective, a behavioural medicine perspective, and a perspective that includes consideration of gender, ethnicity, class and race. The second related purpose is to encourage therapists to adopt a pluralistic approach that can fit an appropriate therapy to appropriate client characteristics.

The chapters are nicely organized. Chapter 1 is an overview and sets forth a pluralistic, multi-approach approach. The next 12 chapters are divided into three chapters for each of the four families of psychotherapy. The first of the three chapters covers the evolution and key concepts of the family. This is an overview. The second of the three chapters covers the clinical applied aspects. It deals with the therapeutic goals, processes and change mechanisms of the approach. The final of the three chapters is an evaluation of the approach's contributions, limitations and current status. The last chapter of the book attempts to blend these four approaches into a pluralistic, multi-approach perspective for treating clients.

Does the book succeed in providing an updated overview of the four major families of psychotherapy: psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, existential-humanistic, and systems? Yes, it does. However, there are lots of other books that also offer current updatings of the various major approaches, many including chapters written by eminent representatives of each approach. The present book has solid competition on this score.

Does the book succeed in looking at these four families from a feminist perspective, a behavioural medicine perspective, and a perspective that includes consideration of gender, ethnicity, class and race? It certainly does, and herein lies the exciting contribution, according to this reviewer at least. If the book has a second edition, I hope that this is elevated to a major purpose, that even more material is included, and that the book receives the plaudits it deserves for adding these ingredients to evaluating psychotherapeutic approaches. This is new and worthwhile material.

Does the book succeed in laying out the author's multi-approach, pluralistic perspective in blending the four families? Not quite. In the next edition, I hope that Dr. Okun calls more on her obvious clinical expertise and experience in showing how she accomplishes this, and especially how she can help readers who accept her notion of blending a feminist perspective, a behavioural medicine perspective, as well as considerations of gender, class and race. This could be even more of a contribution than it is, and a potentially important contribution to the field.

It would also seem to help if the book included at least a token recognition of the rather large literature in the field of an integrative, multi-approach, pluralistic perspective. There have been numerous conferences on this, two major journals on this area, several international organizations dedicated to this perspective, and a solid base of theoretical, training, clinical and research publications. The present book could and should be situated in this larger field, although it stands on its own as a helpful contribution to the integrative clinical literature.