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BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Sue, D.W. *Counseling the culturally different: Theory and practice*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981.

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Within the counselling profession, which historically has been the domain of the white middle class, there is a growing awareness that cultural diversity is an important factor in the counselling encounter. Recognizing or accepting cultural and racial variances has in turn reinforced the need for less culturally bound therapy techniques and perceptions.

In *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice*, Derald Sue has begun to address the problems and issues in cross-cultural counselling. By balancing theory with practice, Sue provides the reader (whether student or practitioner) with specific learning material. By organizing the book into three separate sections: (I) "Issues and Concepts in Cross-Cultural Counseling"; (II) "Counseling Specific Populations"; and (III) "Critical Incidents in Cross-Cultural Counseling", Sue leaves it up to the reader to decide, according to need and interest, whether to use the sections in conjunction with each other, or independently.

In the first section of the book, Sue's overall concern is with the importance and impact of the broader sociopolitical environment on both counsellor and client. Chapter one examines the cultural bias of counselling techniques, diagnostic predictions and curriculum deficiencies and the shortcomings of scientific literature in recognizing the validity of cultural differences. Chapter two moves to the specific problems of how language, class, cultural and communication styles affect the actual counselling process. Chapters three to five continue with specific issues such as the factors that give counsellors influence, how people may have different world views based on interacting cultural and racial identities, and skills that are required of the counsellor.

In sections II and III the author switches from theory to practice. The cultural and

historical perspectives of Blacks, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are presented in four separate chapters in section II: each one written by a practising counsellor/mental health professional familiar with that particular group. At the end of every chapter two or three case histories are used to further illustrate the need for exploration of background, unique conflicts, and subcultural views and values, when counseling ethnic minorities.

Section III contains a number of self learning case vignettes that are intended to help the reader to (a) become culturally aware of personal values; (b) expand awareness of other world views; (c) anticipate possible cultural barriers; and (d) generate alternative counsellor intervention strategies more consistent with the life experiences of minorities.

When I read this book, several points came to my mind. First, the author is consistent in his message that world view, behaviour and responses are affected if not determined by cultural and racial factors. Second, these need to be acknowledged and respected by the professional counsellor. Third, language can be very important. If for example, one cannot speak Spanish but is attempting to counsel an almost unilingual Spanish speaking client the result will likely be frustrating and probably fruitless. And finally, it is not enough to simply acknowledge cultural differences. The counsellor also needs to be flexible; that is, able to use alternate therapy techniques and able to demonstrate some knowledge of the clients' ethnic perspective (i.e., certain modes of therapy are unacceptable to some cultural groups and as such use of them would likely be offensive and unproductive). Although not stated, I assume that the bottom line is that in some situations the counsellor will have to refer to or consult with someone who has the necessary specific skills (language or ethnic knowledge) rather than try to continue the client counselling relationship alone.

Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice is a multipurpose book that can be used by students wanting to increase their awareness of the issues or field staff wanting additional practice. For anyone interested in pursuing cross-cultural counselling it also provides a good starting point for further study.