

BOOK REVIEWS



Book Reviews should be forwarded

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Innovations in Counselling Psychology: Developing new Roles, Settings, Techniques,

Chris. Hatcher, Bonnie S. Brooks and Associates, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1977, pp.406.

The sixteen original articles in this interesting collection succeed admirably in fulfilling the authors' primary goal of bringing together knowledge of recent innovations in selected fields of counselling psychology. The fields chosen for examination range from community counselling, marriage and family counselling, consultation in child development and education to poverty, mental health, gerontology, as well as new developments in the use of computer technology in counselling and new trends in education and training of counsellors.

The first three articles deal with the involvement of counsellors in the community, like community health services, school environment and in industry. The terms such as psychoecologist and activist are used to emphasize the involvement of these professionals in the community, as distinguished from the office environment. The emphasis is placed on involvement of counsellors in innovative programs, settings and roles away from traditional one-to-one direct helping services.

Marriage and family counselling is described in the next article. The historical overview, development in the present and the training of marriage and family counsellors in the future is outlined.

The consultant role in the child development field is the topic of the article written by E. Seidman, who outlines the project developed to assist and educate the new roles taken by counsellors in elementary schools.

The next paper describes the psychoeducational model in psychoeducational education as a new conceptual role involving change from the traditional rehabilitative role to a preventive and educative one.

A description of a child-parent guidance centre is the topic of the paper written by Alschuler and associates, which draws heavily from Adlerian theory to the counselling approach.

A new role, that of student advocate, ombudsman and educator in the poor inner city school environment is advocated by Menacker who, in his paper, urges the counselling psychologists to develop "action-oriented" approaches to student counselling services.

Alternative types of counselling centres are outlined by Hatcher. He describes philosophical and organisational stages and growth of alternative centres, and gives specific examples of three such centres, namely, vocational counselling for unemployed youth, youth counselling centres and telephone crisis intervention.

Counselling with the elderly outlined by Koff & Koff is not as innovative as the authors claim it to be. They describe familiar problems faced by elderly people, and how to deal with them. They include relocation and institutionalisation, grief and depression, death and dying. These problems are being dealt with not only by counsellors, but by many other professionals such as nurses, social workers, clergymen and psychiatrists.

An interesting article on computer technology in counselling describes various computer systems available in the United States and

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which are used in educational, vocational and training guidance.

Finally, the innovations in training and certification of counselling psychologists is described. The analysis of various degree and higher degree courses is presented.

In summary, the innovative counselling services include preventive strategies, consultation, training of paraprofessionals, management, influencing government and political bodies, organisation of research and dissemination of information. Clearly, the counselling psychologist, as the authors advocate, can be a panacea for social problems. Grandiosity that is advocated, not only by counselling psychologists but also by other professionals in the field, is overwhelming. Nurses, social workers, teachers and many more paramedical professionals push their services and claim their influence in alleviating social problems in the existing social system. Also the merging of these professionals into one body capable of exerting some influence in the human welfare field is not propagated in this book.

The outcome of these innovative and thoughtful changes in counselling, described in the book, and their evaluation from an empirical standpoint is not mentioned. This collection of articles is specific to the applied settings in the United States. Whether they can be implemented in the Australian social system remains to be seen. As to the various training programs for counselling psychologists, in Australia they are practically non-existent. Also, the implementation of various innovative programs is very much dependent on the government financial support.

The book is nevertheless a valuable and informative reference

for the administrators who deal with the planning and implementation of counselling services and the development of new programs. Although the book is written from the psychologists' viewpoint, as its title implies, some of its articles could be useful references for other professionals practising counselling in institutions and in the community. It would be useful particularly for those counsellors who are interested in expanding, modifying or changing their existing services. Although the book provides a diverse collection of articles it is holistic, in addition to being well organised and thought provoking.

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THERAPY FOR COUPLES

*By: B.S. Ables & J.B. Brandsma.
Jossey-Bass, 1978. No price. 358
pp.*

Marital therapy is an extraordinarily difficult undertaking as anyone who has had prolonged experience of it has discovered. It is a common experience of mine to pick up a book on marriage or on marriage counselling with a feeling of expectancy and hope, only to find that the author is not able to deliver what he promises. I was not disappointed with this book by Ables and Brandsma. The authors are both associate professors of psychiatry at

the University of Kentucky Medical School and they have obviously had very considerable experience in marital therapy. Their book will amply repay students of the subject including those who are experienced practitioners of marital therapy who might wish to review their current practices, and beginners who are relatively inexperienced in treating dyadic problems.

Among other matters, the authors deal with the early phases of couple therapy, helping couples negotiate differences, facilitating couple communication, altering attitudes — perceptions and misperceptions, and specific problems in therapy. Their presentation is well organised and lucid and there is a notable absence of speculative guessing that characterises so many books of this type.

Their book focuses on the work of the therapist rather than on individuals or marriages with which the therapist works. They bring together theory and practice but the emphasis is practical and the reader is brought into the therapist's room to see how the therapist works. The orientation presented for understanding behaviour is a psychodynamic one but a variety of conceptions and techniques are applied that can only be termed eclectic. Their couple therapy is essentially an ego-psychological, problem-solving approach that relies heavily on cognitive orientation, although the under-pinning is psychodynamic. Present transactions between the couple in therapy are heavily relied on to guide therapeutic interventions. Nevertheless, they recognise the limitations of the problem — solving approach used in isolation and they move back and forth between present transactions and interventions which attempt to further awareness.

The authors are well aware how superficial therapeutic work may be if it focuses only on a solution to