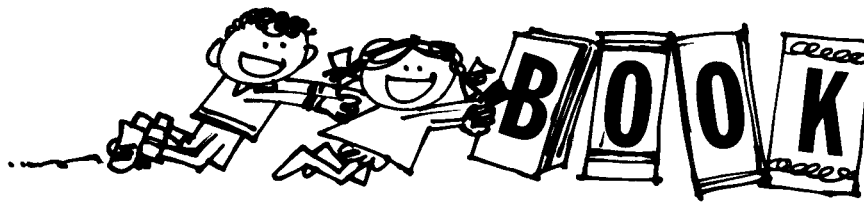


**Book Review Editor
Ruth Stewart**



in mental hospitals do not attract the best doctors, and there was no supervision." (p.19)

Some of the criticisms rely for their validity on the belief that there are children in the hospital who are not severely retarded. No evidence is produced to support this claim, or the claim that deformed children are admitted as babies, regardless of their intelligence, to this "state garbage bin".

Contrary evidence has been presented by the government enquiry. Eleven of the twelve children whom Miss Crossley claimed were not retarded were found to be severely or profoundly retarded by an independent body of experts. The twelfth, Anne, was not subject to the enquiry, having already left the hospital.

Claims that children, once admitted, receive no further investigation are also found to be false. If they were true, one could not explain how children come to be moved into special education programs within and without the hospital, sometimes transferred to other facilities, or sent to the Children's Hospital for assistance with physical problems. Miss Crossley should know that specialist staff have always visited the hospital regularly to advise regarding various aspects of the children's care.

The authors state that the medical staff is incompetent, that nurses punish the children by putting them in a dark, cupboard-like room, that the children are starved to death by poor feeding, brutally restrained and encouraged to die, that Anne was bashed by a nurse and that someone attempted to smother her with a pillow. No evidence is given in support of these allegations. They seem to contradict a statement on page five that the deprivations in the institution only really affect the children who are not genuinely retarded.

Other criticisms refer to problems in architecture, which no one disputes, and to the problems of responding to the needs of profoundly retarded, multiple-

handicapped children, or any children, in a group situation. These problems deserve an objective and clear search for solutions, including an honest assessment of alternatives.

As a critique of a particular institution, the book has far too many inaccuracies which tend to prevent the reader appreciating the forward thinking ideas of Miss Crossley. It does not attempt to explore in any way the general problems of caring for such profoundly mentally and physically handicapped people, the emotional problems for staff, or the problematic place of hope. For nursing and teaching staff must find themselves in the paradoxical position of somehow acting as if they believe in growth and development, being ever ready to see it if it occurs, but seeing potential as irrelevant to their care and commitment.



"ENDS AND MEANS IN SOCIAL WORK — the Development and Outcome of a Case Review System for Social Workers" National Institute Social Services Library. No. 35. By E. Matilda Goldberg and R. Williams Warburton. 155 pages. Published by George Allen & Unwin, London, 1979. Reviewed by Sandra de Wolf (B.A. Hons., Dip.Soc.Stud.)

Reorganisation of an English local authority personal social services provided the impetus for this book. The authors carried out a series of surveys and action studies in the early and mid 70's and developed a Case Review System as their main monitoring tool. The major emphasis in the book is on the development and use of this Case Review System.

The authors had three main aims in their research. First, to find out what the clients and social workers thought about the newly re-organised social

services; second, to discover how social work skills and resources are used to meet different client needs, and third to enable social workers to become more explicit about means and ends of their activities. The research was carried out in an area office of an English town serving a population of 73,000. Perceptions of clients and social workers were studied in 1972, soon after the integration of the social services, and again in 1975. The Case Review System was developed over a couple of years and used from February 1975 for one year.

The section on social worker and consumer perspectives (Chapter 3) contains interesting information on persistent areas of "conflict" in perspectives. In particular, the emphasis placed by social workers on the "helping relationship" and discussing "personal problems" was not supported by the clients who "appeared to take a sympathetic receptive attitude by the social workers for granted". (Page 15) Social workers also tended to undervalue their contribution and be acutely aware of their gaps in knowledge, skills etc. Another interesting finding was that, despite a substantial decrease in caseload size over the three years, the social workers still felt under considerable pressure. Conflict over deciding priorities, lack of clear definition of tasks and roles, awareness of gaps in information and services and a surfeit of clerical and administrative tasks all contributed to the feelings of dissatisfaction experienced by social workers.

The authors also wanted to test whether they could identify neighbourhoods with different "social need profiles" and, if so, whether these related to rates and kinds of client contact with the area office. From the social workers' subjective sketches and census information, they divided the district into nine clusters. Not surprisingly, they found that "high use of social work services is still very much



associated with low socio-economic status, above average unemployment, large families and poor housing conditions" (page 57). While this process of cluster analysis does require major statistical input and has some limitations, the use of such social indicators related to service provision does raise many questions for the providers.

By 1975, the area office was using one intake team and two long-term teams. Chapters 7 to 13 use the information collected from the Case Review System for a detached examination of the work of the office by the three teams. After analysing the work of the intake team, the authors question whether there are appropriate demands on a Social Service Department and whether social workers are the best people to perform all the tasks.

The detailed information presented on the work of the long-term teams has little relevance apart from the conclusions. They found that concentration on surveillance and review visiting was recorded for 75% of all cases; in over 50%, no change was expected; and nearly 75% of the cases were to remain open indefinitely. The authors rightly question the usefulness of such long term contacts and stress the need for a more task-centred approach. In particular, the chronically disorganised and disturbed families used an inordinate amount of social work resources, sometimes over many years, with few visible results and the need for earlier intervention was stressed.

The Case Review System was the major tool used in the research study. It was developed by a working party of six staff and two research workers over two years and includes some areas of conceptualisation that could be easily transferred (e.g. social worker transactions). It was intended to fulfil five functions:— first, as a practice tool for individual workers; second, as an educational tool in supervision; third, as a

management tool, in planning of services; fourth, as an information system, about the nature of social worker/client activities; and fifth, as a research tool. At the end of the project, the Case Review System was evaluated by the social workers. It was found that the value of the System was seen primarily as a monitoring and planning tool, which enabled staff to relate their work to that of the whole office, and gain an appreciation of the needs of the areas and the use of different social work techniques. It was also noted that greatest commitment to the system came from those people most directly involved in the project and the authors themselves questioned the efficacy of introducing a similar system "cold" into another office.

In their conclusion, the authors question the ability of a Social Services Department to provide comprehensive help for all. They argue for a greater use of the voluntary sector, preventive community programmes, outposting of social services personnel, task-centred work and specialisation of gate-keeping functions. This last chapter summarises much of what is considered basic in contemporary social work practice. There is little that is new, although the authors stress the need for further experimentation in new ways of deploying social work resources, their evaluation and other monitoring tools like the Case Review System. It is interesting to note that their conclusions on the role of a Social Services Department based on their research findings are consistent with the current ideological arguments on the role of the State, voluntary sector and community.

"Ends and Means" is very readable and quite well presented. Its main interest for Australian readers is the information on the development and use of the Case Review System, and especially the section on implementation and evaluation. The obvious limitation of the Case Review System as described is its failure to consider any

direct involvement in the process. In fact, although the research clearly showed the desire of clients to participate in the running of services, there was no attempt by the writers to explore this area further or accommodate this expressed desire in their analysis.

The book will also interest people concerned about evaluating their own social worker/client process and relating this to potential and actual client populations. The information on cluster analysis is not very developed, but it does provide a means of investigating client contact and raising questions about current service delivery.

BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Many of these books will be reviewed in forthcoming issues.

Burnard, Don. **Towards a life of loving.** Hill of Content. 2nd Edition, 1980. 189 pp. \$6.95.

Hannan, C. **Parents and mentally handicapped children.** Penguin, 1980 (Reprint). 175 pp. \$3.95.

Harper, J. **Fathers at home.** Hill of Content, 1980. 108 pp. \$4.95.

Johnson, V. **The last resort — a women's refuge.** Penguin, 1981, 204 pp. \$7.95.

Judge, K. & Matthews, J. **Charging for social care.** George, Allen and Unwin, 1980. 150 pp, \$33.50, hardback, or \$12.95, paperback.

Kenihan, K. **How to be the parents of a handicapped child: a survival guide.** Penguin, 1981. 202 pp. \$5.95.

N.S.W. Association of Child Caring Agencies. **Young people in care speak out.** 1980. 62 pp.

Sandstrom, C.I. **The psychology of childhood and adolescence,** Pelican Reprint. 1979. 288 pp. \$3.95.

Snowball, D. & Bolton, F. Springer Series Set 2 (12 books) Cassell Australia 1980. \$6.95 or \$1.25 per book.

Veevers, J.E. **Childless by choice.** Butterworths, 1980. 220 pp. \$16.00.