

Book Reviews

Edited by Sidney Crown and Alan Lee

Residential Treatment – A Cooperative, Competency-Based Approach to Therapy and Program Design. By MICHAEL DURRANT. New York: W. W. Norton. 1993. 203 pp. US\$27.95 (hb).

This is a book by a psychologist and family therapist aimed specifically at those working in in-patient units for adolescents. It is a book of ideas. The content may be challenging and the style Antipodean, but after a day attending a management review of the need for your service, or wrestling with some intricacy of the multidisciplinary team, then this book will refresh the parts other tomes cannot reach. The reason is that Michael Durrant believes enthusiastically in the beneficial potential of creatively applied in-patient programmes for young people, and says so.

The author points to the gulf that often exists between psychotherapeutic ideas, particularly in family therapy, and ideas about residential treatment. He argues that admission tends to be seen as a second-best solution to crisis, and one which reinforces ideas of failure in young people and their families. The task of a unit may seem to be the change or repair of damaged or disturbed young people, rather than the development of areas of competence. The locus of such change is then seen to be within therapeutic sessions which become reified, while other activities on the unit are devalued.

As an alternative, Durrant sees it as the task of the therapeutic team to develop a way of thinking about the residential programme that gives an integrated, consistent framework for all the work and activity which happens there, so that different facets become complementary rather than competing. He suggests that admission is framed as an opportunity for growth, for experimentation in other ways of behaving, and for exploration of alternative narratives about events. The metaphor of a rite of passage involving phases of separation, transition and re-integration is used. The focus becomes goal-directed rather than problem-driven, and young people, their families and professional staff work in cooperative alliance.

None of these ideas are new in themselves, but they are brought together and explored in this book in a clear, practical way. In the past, attempts to integrate systemic family therapy with the context of in-patient

programmes have usually employed structural models of family relationships, often focusing on control issues. Other schools of family therapy have proved difficult to apply. The theoretical developments which underpin the broader, more flexible approaches put forward in the book are succinctly described. The constraints on the wholesale adoption of these ideas are acknowledged, and many pages are devoted to suggestions and descriptions about their implementation which are helpful and easy to read.

Trainees in child and adolescent psychiatry should put this book on their reading list, since they will want to take part in the debate as to whether these ideas form a coherent and positive model around which to shape future service provision, or whether, in the current climate, it is best to regard them simply as an escapist fantasy.

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Neuropsychiatric Disorders. By GARETH W. ROBERTS, P. NIGEL LEIGH and DANIEL R. WEINBERGER. Aylesford, Kent: Mosby Yearbook. 1993. 300 pp. £80.00 (hb).

If you are looking for a glossy, well-illustrated, Membership level neuropsychiatry text, and money is no object, then this may be for you. It is not comprehensive (so you will also need Lishman) but focuses on a number of currently high-profile topics including prion disease, AIDS dementia and Lewy bodies. There is also a useful section on the neurobiology of schizophrenia and mood disorders. The many colourful tables, photographs and diagrams would make excellent teaching transparencies, and may derive from that source.

The chapters provide a precis of each area under the broad categories of dementias, motor disorders, epilepsy and psychoses. Each area has a list of suggested reading, rather than references in the text. This makes it less of an effort to read than some reference-clogged texts. The principal author is a neuroanatomist, which may explain the only quirky element to the book: the