

Book reviews

EDITED BY SIDNEY CROWN and ALAN LEE

Clinical Topics in Psychotherapy

Edited by Digby Tantam. London: Gaskell. 1998. 288 pp. £30 (pb). ISBN 1-901242-22-6

The editor has drawn together an excellent team of authors to summarise the clinical evidence for psychotherapy in a wide range of conditions. Despite some omissions, such as psychological treatment of substance misuse, the ground covered in a medium-sized volume is remarkable. Most of the authors are not only acknowledged as experts in the field, but also have contributed extensively to the research literature while keeping a base in clinical practice.

There are some contributions which transcend diagnostic categories and provide outstanding clinical advice. Tom Burns' chapter on psychiatric emergencies should be obligatory reading for all trainees starting psychotherapy as it integrates sound practical advice from psychiatry with an understanding of the different role of the therapist. There is good coverage of the growth areas in psychological treatments such as cognitive-behavioural interventions in psychosis, and the development of integrative treatments for personality disorder.

The editor has let the authors develop their own style, and in general this works well. It does lead to some inconsistencies, however. Some chapters are comprehensively referenced whereas others select a few key texts; some authors have attempted to be as even-handed and impartial as possible, whereas others have focused on their own favoured approach. Either approach can work, but for non-specialists the result could be confusing. As an example, the opening chapter gives a very general overview of the nature of anxiety disorders, whereas the second on depression (one of several chapters reprinted from the *British Journal of Psychiatry*) deals almost exclusively with efficacy studies without discussing what is covered by the umbrella term 'depression'.

I regretted the lack of an overview chapter, which could have covered some themes that could not be covered in any

particular chapter. There is little or nothing on such key clinical issues as formulation, forming and maintaining a therapeutic alliance, ending therapy, or measuring change. This book takes a broad view of the nature of evidence, which is welcome, but some of the chapters may take this liberty too far, and so a *caveat* in the Preface warns the unwary that these are not systematic reviews by the conventions of modern evidence-based medicine.

Despite these shortcomings, the book is accessible and readable and will be a good reference for either individual or departmental libraries.

Frank Margison Consultant Psychotherapist,
Gaskell Psychotherapy Centre, Manchester Royal
Infirmary, Swinton Grove, Manchester M13 0EU

Interpersonal Psychotherapy

By John C. Markovitz. 1998. Washington, DC:
American Psychiatric Press. 162 pp.
£22.50 (pb). ISBN 0-88048-836-0

The practitioners of interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) have made a significant contribution to establish the efficacy and respectability of brief psychological treatments. It is a shame, therefore, that IPT is somewhat the poor relation of the much more widely available cognitive-behavioural therapies. In the UK at least there are few practitioners of IPT and few opportunities for training in the technique. This volume sets out the stall for IPT in a clear and readable way. Although the book does not provide a manual as to the exact treatment techniques, the chapters are full of clinical material and detailed case histories which are not only of interest but also provide practical pointers to using IPT in the clinical setting.

IPT has been most carefully studied as a treatment for mood disorders. The suggestion that low mood is a response to psychosocial difficulties of an interpersonal nature has a face validity. It is unsurprising,

therefore, that much of the book focuses on IPT in the treatment of depression. There are specific chapters looking at adolescent depression, depression in HIV-positive patients and preventive treatments. There is also a particularly helpful chapter looking at IPT for the treatment of bulimia nervosa, together with indications as to the more experimental use of IPT in other conditions, including anxiety disorders, somatisation, borderline personality disorder and bipolar disorder.

The book would have been improved by more critical discussion of the research presented. There is also little discussion as to the merits, and place, of IPT compared with other psychological treatments or medication. Overall, however, this is an excellent introduction to IPT for those with little or no knowledge of the field. For those already with an interest in psychological treatments, the book provides a welcome update of the potential range of conditions for treatment. I would recommend it for individual clinicians as a counter to the many pharmacological text books that are available, and I think it would be a useful addition to departmental libraries.

L Mynors-Wallis Consultant Psychiatrist,
Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust, Senior Lecturer
University of Southampton, Department of
Psychiatry, St Ann's Hospital, 69 Haven Road, Poole
BH13 7LN

Emotions in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues

Edited by Gillian Bendelow & Simon J.
Williams. 1998. London & New York:
Routledge. 336 pp. £17.99 (pb).
ISBN 0-415-13799-3

Since the early 1980s sociologists have developed a more systematic interest in the sociology of emotion, and their major professional associations now have lively sub-groups devoted to this area of enquiry. Bendelow and Williams, contributors themselves to this field from the University of Warwick, have edited a collection of 17 substantial papers intended both to delineate its scope and variety and also to represent the current work of (mainly) British and American authors.

In a brief review it is not possible to refer to all the themes considered in this