

monitor successfully adolescent therapy groups.

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**Good Practice in Counselling  
People Who Have Been Abused**

Edited by Z. Bear. London: Jessica Kingsley,  
1998. 203 pp. £16.95 (pb).  
ISBN 1-85302-424-4

This is an interesting book written from the perspective of survivors of child sexual abuse, providing detailed, and rather harrowing, accounts of recovery from early experiences of childhood abuse.

The contributors to the book are experienced professionals working in the field of child care and child abuse and include psychologists, social workers, journalists and victims/survivors of sexual abuse. A weakness of the book seems to be its failure to put the other side of the false memory syndrome argument in any

convincing way for the reader to consider. Marjorie Orr's introduction to the book goes straight in on the side of the disbelieved victim in what she terms the "memory wars". The arguments put forward by Orr and others in the book, encourage professionals to believe most allegations of sexual abuse by victims and the points made are powerful and clinically persuasive.

The book was presumably composed and written before the recent publication of the controversial article by Brandon *et al* (1998) in which recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse are discussed in the light of some of the available literature. Brandon *et al*'s (1998) article concludes that when memories are recovered after long periods of amnesia, particularly when extraordinary means are used to secure the recovery of the memory, there is a high probability that the memories are false, that is of incidents that had not occurred. In contrast, contributors to the book describe a halting and hesitant process of recovering memories of alleged sexual abuse which, taken in conjunction with the emotional and behavioural problems they also describe in their lives, make compelling reading. It was particularly moving to read the survivor

accounts of attempts to come to terms with powerful and disturbing memories of their own abuse in the course of undertaking therapy of various types. However, this is where a more objective discussion of the points made in the Brandon *et al* article in advising caution about the use of extraordinary means to recover memories might (paradoxically) have boosted the credibility of this clinical book.

Overall, this is a timely, interesting and important publication which will be read sympathetically by those working with sexual abuse victims, which may contribute to a responsible debate about the nature of traumatic amnesia and which in the words of the editor, Zetta Bear, may "serve as a marker for the responsible and ethical allocation of resources in the future".

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**Brandon, S., Boakes, J., Glaser, D., et al (1998)**

Recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. Implications for clinical practice. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, **172**, 296–307.

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