

Book Reviews

Editor: Sidney Crown

Preschoolers and Substance Abuse. By PEDRO J. LECCA and THOMAS D. WATTS. New York: The Haworth Press. 1993. 107 pp. US \$24.95 (hb), \$19.95 (pb).

It is encouraging to see a publication drawing attention to the effects of drug and alcohol abuse on pre-school children. Its focus is on strategies for prevention and intervention in a community, societal and family context. It attempts to cover both the development of substance abuse in youngsters and the effects of substance-abusing parents on children.

The bulk of the book consists of references to research with the authors' evaluations. This, and the fact that it was very disorganised, with chapter headings and sub-headings bearing little relationship to the text, made for heavy reading. However, there are some well considered criticisms.

There is a chapter on prenatal and postnatal consequences of maternal substance abuse, but only foetal alcohol syndrome is addressed in any detail. Other sequelae, for example child abuse, are mentioned but not examined. A further chapter is devoted to prevention strategies. Usefully, it looks at parental participation, but strays into school-based programmes and community programmes for adolescents. This seems irrelevant in a book focusing on pre-schoolers.

A large proportion of the book is concerned with cultural issues. The aim is to examine how cultural patterns of behaviour affect the ways families seek and respond to service delivery. The summary and practical suggestions are pertinent but much of the detail is lost on the non-American reader, a criticism I would extend to the book as a whole. The authors list their recommendations in a final chapter emphasising the importance of looking at social, cultural and economic factors.

This is a slim volume, much of which is devoted to lists of references and a bibliography. I was left with the feeling that too much had been attempted in insufficient detail and that the focus of pre-school children had been lost. Last, but by no means least, the typeface is remarkably poor.

JUDITH NICHOLLS, *Senior Registrar in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Irwin Unit for Young People, Hollymoor Hospital, Birmingham*

College Student Development. Edited by LEIGHTON C. WHITAKER and RICHARD E. SLIMAK. New York: The Haworth Press. 1993. 231 pp. US \$44.95 (hb), \$35.95 (pb).

This is a multi-authored book with contributions predominantly from psychologists all actively engaged in student counselling and psychological services. The authors share a developmental framework for understanding student problems, grounded in psychoanalysis: Erikson, Mahler, Blos, and A. Freud. (One contributor adds an interesting Jungian perspective.) However, individual dynamics are related both to the general cultural and the academic context. Between them, the authors attempt to address the bewildering array of competing values and cultural expectations which confront college students today in an intensely competitive multi-cultural society undergoing rapid change. The huge hazards to personal development are recognised.

Psychological symptoms and relationship difficulties, sexual problems, suicide, drug abuse, violence, rape, eating disorders and issues of gender development are among the topics discussed. Counselling and psychotherapeutic responses are considered, and there is an innovative chapter on family therapy in a college context. Most authors provide useful case examples.

The need for bridges between helping services and administrators is a central theme, with the broad aim of fostering the developmental potential of the organisation. There is, however, no consideration of interrelationships between counselling, medical, and psychiatric services.

There is, perhaps, too little linkage between the individual contributors. Each provides his/her own bibliography, and the book lacks an index.

For British readers involved in health and counselling services in higher education, and for academics and administrators concerned with student welfare, there is much in this book to inform and stimulate. It should be read by all concerned with late adolescent development today.

CHRIS LUCAS, *Consultant Psychotherapist, The Stockwell Centre, Colchester.*