

us a marvellous resource for counsellors and other clinicians working with older adults. Whilst at times, perhaps, the ambition of its scale results in some moments of unevenness which seem to me to stem from the difficulty of such a large project from a single author, there are also great strengths in this approach, in terms of overall coherence and unity of style. I very much hope that this book will be an evolving project, with new editions in future. To my mind, much of it works beautifully and I believe it has the potential to be a 'first port of call' resource for teachers and experienced clinicians, as well as those newly entering the field. I applaud the hard work, intelligence and humanity that have gone into this work, and I certainly will be drawing on it in future, in my clinical teaching.

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K. Warner Schaie and Sherry L. Willis (eds), *Handbook of the Psychology of Aging*, seventh edition, Academic Press (Elsevier), Burlington, Massachusetts and San Diego, California, 2011, 434 pp., pbk \$99.95, ISBN 13: 978 0 12 380882 0.

This is the seventh edition of this handbook: K. Warner Schaie previously shared the editorship with James E. Birren, who has now passed the reins over to Sherry L. Willis. The organisation of co-editors, associate editors and authors is quite extensive, with an editorial principle of not inviting authors to update their topic but instead approaching the topic from a new perspective, as well as a review of each chapter by an associate editor *and* both co-editors. The handbook itself consists of four main sections (Part 1: Concepts, Theory and Methods in the Psychology of Aging; Part 2: Neuroscience, Cognition and Aging; Part 3: Social and Health Factors that Impact Aging; Part 4: Complex Behavioural Processes and Psychopathology of Aging). These consist of stand-alone chapters authored by some well-known names in ageing research. As the handbook consists of 24 chapters by more than 50 different authors, it is difficult to give an overview of all the chapters so I have chosen to highlight the aspects of each section that I found most noteworthy.

Part 1 sets the background. Theories of ageing, as well as methodological and analytical issues of the psychology of ageing, are well explained. Some good solutions of the latter are provided by Emilio Ferrer and Paolo Ghisletta. I particularly liked the section which looks at incomplete data and attrition, as the authors provide ways of resolving these issues: this chapter should be useful for researchers trying to analyse their data. Additionally, K. Warner Schaie explores historical influences on ageing and behaviour and presents an interesting framework for studying cohort differences in intelligence.

Part 2 turns the reader's attention to brain function in ageing. This was the section of the book that I struggled with the most as I found the jargon

used and the number of acronyms within the chapters hard to keep track of. This did not aid the reading of an already complex subject area. Karen Rodrigue and Kristen Kennedy do present an interesting chapter about the cognitive consequences of structural changes to the ageing brain, although the reader would really need to know brain anatomy to understand the text. The chapter would be good for dipping into for reference but not for reading from start to finish.

Part 3 explores the social and health factors that impact ageing and, personally, this was the most interesting section of the book. Thought-provoking ideas are explored by Margie Lachman, Shevaun Neupert and Stefan Agrigoroaei, such as whether relinquishing control of one's affairs is harmful or beneficial. Karen Fingerman and Kira Birditt present a fascinating chapter about the changing relationship between adults and their parents, which, as pointed out by the authors, can often last longer than the young child–parent relationship. Howard Giles and Jessica Gasiorek present a range of situations in which over-accommodation occurs, as well as ways of preventing and managing the issue.

Part 4 concerns complex behavioural processes and the psychopathology of ageing. Susan Turk Charles discusses experiences in older age and the concept that emotions are relatively stable through life. Bob Knight and Andres Losada explore care-giving for cognitively or physically frail older relatives, which is thought to result in negative consequences for the mental and physical health of the care-giver. This is particularly the case if the relative has dementia, and interestingly the effects can be worse for female than for male care-givers. Barry Edelstein, Stacey Wood and Aida Saldivar bring the section to a close by examining the decision-making capacity of older adults, and presenting a framework for clinical assessment but they stress that this is 'not a "how-to" guide to clinical assessment' (p. 368). They also look at capacity to consent issues.

Overall, the handbook aims to provide a foundation for an understanding of the issues of ageing for both the individual and the wider society and it achieves this through the wide range of topics covered. However, I will add a few caveats. I have read a couple of other books about the Psychology of Ageing (yes I will spell ageing with an 'e' as I am English!) and I expected this text to be similar. This was not the case, because some of the chapters within this handbook were hard to digest. I would say this is definitely not a book for service users unless they have at least a first degree in psychology. The use of language and jargon as well as the concepts that the book discusses may present problems to many readers and at times simpler terms could have been used. To be fair, the back cover does indicate that the book is suitable for researchers 'and as a high-level textbook for graduates and upper-level undergraduate courses' but even they may struggle with the complicated language used in some chapters.

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