

Children of Battered Women. By PETER G. JAFFE, DAVID A. WOLFE and SUSAN KAYE WILSON. London: Sage Publications. 1990. 132 pp. £10.95.

This little book is the latest in a series from the publisher which brings together information on specific aspects of child psychiatry, which might otherwise be scattered through a range of publications for different professionals. In this wide area of children involved in domestic violence this means that developmental child psychology, child psychiatric symptoms, sociological data and the law can be brought together to develop a rationale for intervention and treatment in a coherent framework. This is not just informative and helpful for focusing on the problem but also gets around the false dichotomy which sometimes arises in topics like this between 'real psychiatry' and 'social problems'.

The material is logically organised. Chapter 1 gives an overview of domestic violence, although only from North America. Chapter 2 reports on specific studies on children in refuges, using a developmental perspective to understand the different responses that children can display. Chapter 3 looks at theoretical aspects of the link between domestic violence and future problems in the children and the fourth chapter draws this together in a logical framework for assessment and treatment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The last chapter is possibly the least directly helpful, as it looks at the implications for various agencies if they take the needs of this group of children seriously. Again, it discusses the North American structure, although there are some similarities.

This is not a book which develops new theories, but it usefully organises theoretical aspects around clinical findings in children who, as part of the spectrum of victims and survivors of abuse, form a significant part of clinical practice but often an insignificant part of standard textbooks. Adult mental health workers would find it equally useful as a reminder of the importance of this problem and its relevance to psychological functioning.

RACHEL LEHEUP, *Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Nottingham*

Human Aggression: Naturalistic Approaches. Edited by JOHN ARCHER and KEVIN BROWNE. London: Routledge. 1989. 284 pp. £35.00 (hb), £12.95 (pb).

The editors suggest that the naturalistic approach to the study of aggression offers the best basis for identifying, preventing and treating violent behaviour. Given that the naturalistic approach eschews the laboratory in favour of viewing aggression in the context of the interactions, relationships and situations in which it occurs, that might seem a statement of the obvious. What is less easy to accept is the assertion that human aggression is

one of the most pervasive and serious problems facing modern societies. What are the others? Put another way, the editors claim to have identified in aggression one of the major issues for modern mankind. By following their approach you stand the best chances of preventing and treating violent behaviour. This is too good to miss!

With that promise it is not surprising that the book is disappointing. The eleven psychologists who have contributed to this well edited and cohesive volume all adopt a common-sense approach to the subject which left this reader with the impression that he had not learned anything new. The book's weakness lies in an absence of almost any reference to the psychopathology and phenomenology. Its strengths are in Beynon's chapter, "A school for men: an ethnographic case study of routine violence in schooling", and Howells' chapter "Anger management methods in relation to the prevention of violent behaviour".

Surely psychiatrists, like general practice receptionists, would benefit greatly from a proficiency in anger management?

PAUL BOWDEN, *Maudsley Hospital, London*

Psychology in Prisons. By DAVID J. COOKE, PAMELA J. BALDWIN and JACQUELINE HOWISON. London & New York: Routledge. 1990. 147 pp. £25.00.

This book aims to give a deeper understanding of why offenders sometimes behave in unusual and unexpected ways when held in custody. The main emphasis of this book is to explain how a knowledge of psychology would improve prison officers' ability to deal with offenders. The book argues that by applying psychological principles, behaviour within prisons can be better understood and violence and stress can be limited.

The three authors are all psychologists who have worked extensively with prisoners and prison staff. Their book is divided in two sections; the first section is concerned with the origins of criminal behaviour, while the second half of the book attempts to show how psychology can be applied to be more effective in the day-to-day job of dealing with prisoners.

The 13 chapters deal with virtually the whole range of crime. The chapter on understanding violence and aggression is of particular interest. Chapters on coping with disturbed prisoners and facing violence will be of direct relevance to most staff working in prisons.

Highly topical are the chapters on the impact of AIDS in prison life, and hostage-taking in prison.

The book is primarily geared towards prison officers; this will somewhat limit the interest of mental health professionals working, for example, in the field of forensic psychiatry. Further limitations are a non-existing list of references and a rather limited two-page index. The price for the hardback appears rather steep; a possibly less expensive paperback version is not available.