

Book reviews

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Principles of Therapeutic Change That Work.
Edited by L. G. Castonguay and L. E. Beutler. (Pp. 400; \$60; ISBN 0-19-515684-3 hb.) Oxford University Press: New York, 2006.

This edited volume represents work that comes from a jointly sponsored [Society of Clinical Psychology (APA, Division 12) and the North American Society for Psychotherapy Research (NASPR)] task force charged to identify principles of change from the psychotherapy literature. Three factors contributing to the outcome of therapy are emphasized: (a) participant factors (i.e. patient and therapist), (b) relationship factors, and (c) technique factors. The book then reviews data for each factor for four major problems: depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and substance use disorders. A concluding chapter in each of these four sections attempts to integrate the three factors. Introductory and concluding chapters are also included, the latter nicely summarizing many of the take-home messages of the volume.

The two basic questions the book (and the Task Force) aimed to answer were: (a) What is known about the nature of the participants, relationships, and procedures within treatment that induce positive effects across the theoretical models and methods? and (b) How do the factors or variables that are related to participants, relationships, and treatments, work together to enhance change?

Overall, the text is admirable in its effort to address the thorny and complex issues associated with an endeavour such as this. The book largely accomplishes its goal of answering these two questions and its organization contributes nicely to this. Terrific scholars have been selected and their contributions are solid – overall, the book is an even treatment of these complex issues. The integrative chapters represent excellent resources for students, practitioners,

and clinical researchers. For specialists and researchers within a particular clinical area, the chapters focused on participant, relationship, and technique represent impressive reviews of the literature.

Despite these and other strengths, there are a few weaknesses that a reader should be aware of when approaching the text. The first weakness is not so much of the book but of the literature. Although the authors take great pains to point out the relative paucity of research, referring to the principles as ‘empirically based’ rather than ‘empirically supported’, the relative dearth of research on all three of the factors for many of the problem areas covered leaves much in doubt, despite the multiple summaries of principles. Many have criticized the lack of research on the relationship and participant factors (Martin *et al.* 2000; Shirk & Karver, 2003; Kiesler, 2004; DeRubeis *et al.* 2005); there is also a lack of work on the mechanisms of treatments, even those with a long history of empirical support (Kazdin, 2006). As noted, the book does a decent job of ‘owning’ these shortcomings. However, there is not enough attention afforded to laying bare the major problems in these literatures. This may have been viewed as beyond the purview of the Task Force, but it remains an important task to accomplish. Kazdin (2006) has nicely delineated many of the issues relevant for the technique factor that remain un-elucidated. With regard to the relationship factor, there has been very little work done that clearly defines what relationship factors are important and then reliably measuring those. Recent reviews of the relationship and alliance literatures for adults and children suggest that there is much work to be done with regard to construct and measure development. As such, conclusions about principles of the relationship are premature. Although we strongly believe that the relationship is indeed an important part of what makes psychological treatments work, we also believe that identifying exactly what about the relationship works remains largely work for the future. In short, the

principles from the book are in many ways reasonable starting points, but, as the authors note, are at best 'empirically based.'

A second issue to consider regards the 'prescription' that results from the work done by the Task Force. Although the volume does a splendid job reviewing the literature and integrating a diverse set of findings, there is little specific guidance to assist in the training of mental health practitioners. This is a criticism that may (again) represent work that was beyond the work of the Task Force. However, as the book may be used as a resource for practitioners in training, it is worth noting that the conclusions drawn and the principles defined are, at times, too vague to inform training. It may have been useful to refer interested trainees to primary sources wherein they can learn the 'how to' of these principles. Further, many of the principles are so vague and so 'rational' that we can imagine many therapists and trainees saying, for example, 'I would never make "excessive" relational interpretations (p. 74)'. Relatedly, we were disappointed by the lack of attention to remedies for the participant factors that forebode poor outcomes (e.g. poor relationships during early years, financial/occupational difficulties). Because many of the book's readers will be faced with clients with these characteristics, resources for such situations would be helpful.

In sum, Castonguay and Beutler's edited volume *Principles of Therapeutic Change that Work* has much to offer clinical researchers and practitioners alike. The principles the Task Force delineated are terrific contributions. Further, their effort to integrate across diverse literatures and theoretical camps is laudable and well done. Although we found a few issues to raise, they were in large part our own effort to continue the effort to continue the work started by the Task Force rather than criticisms of the volume itself.

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Psychiatric Genetics. By K. S. Kendler and L. J. Eaves. (Pp. 240; \$34.95; ISBN 1 58562 228 pb.) American Psychiatric Publishing Inc.: Washington, DC. 2005.

Psychiatric Genetics is one of the final-year publications in the Annual Review of Psychiatry series, an initiative that aimed to summarize new developments in psychiatry for a general psychiatric readership. Overall *Psychiatric Genetics* is an interesting and well-written book that meets the objectives of the review series. It provides an up-to-date summary of genetic findings within psychiatry, as well as describing various approaches to determining genetic contribution to variation in psychiatric disorders and methods at locating specific variants that contribute to risk.

The book is divided into six chapters, four of which focus upon developments in genetics within specific fields of psychiatry including schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders and antisocial behaviour. Preceding these is a chapter describing models and methods used in genetics, as well as an informative introduction to the book written by Kenneth Kendler. The introduction outlines three paradigms by which the role of genetic factors can be explored in psychiatry; twin and adoption studies, gene-finding techniques, and molecular genetic approaches. These are described clearly and coherently, with links between the paradigms cogently made, and nice examples of how genetic epidemiology may be used to answer particular clinical problems. It introduces the subsequent chapters as 'vignettes' for a general psychiatry audience, and acknowledges that only a limited area of psychiatric research is

included in the book, sensibly preferring to focus on a limited number of subjects in more depth rather than all subjects in brief.

The second chapter, 'Questions, models and methods in psychiatric genetics' starts well, emphasizing the point that genetic studies do not imply that all behaviour can be explained by biological processes, but that biology (and genes) nevertheless clearly play an important part. Furthermore, although focusing primarily on genetic variation, the authors also highlight the role that genetic studies can play in addressing the extent to which shared and unique environmental effects have on behaviour, as well as describing reciprocal effects of genes and environment on each other. There is a nice description of path analysis as a method of disentangling different genetic and environmental effects on behavioural outcomes, but when describing association and linkage approaches this chapter suffers the same problem that most texts have in this area; namely that it is difficult to make a highly complex and specialized area understandable to a more generalized audience. The authors make a reasonable attempt at making this understandable, although a more basic overview of these topics might have been more useful for the intended readership of the book. Inclusion of descriptions of structural equation modelling and time-series approaches to genetic studies, as well as fairly detailed discussions of gene-environment interplay are also unlikely to be of interest for most readers aiming to gain an overview of psychiatric genetics, but will be useful of course for those wishing to understand about these methods in more detail.

The subsequent four chapters focus on genetic studies in specific areas within psychiatry. In the first of these, there is a nice summary of the main findings from both linkage and association studies in relation to schizophrenia, with interesting links to potential biological pathways involved in the aetiology of this disorder. There is also a useful description of the difficulty in defining clear-cut boundaries for diagnosis of this disorder and the effects this might have on genetic studies, that is likely to be relevant to some extent for the majority of psychiatric disorders. The subsequent chapter is an easy to read summary of the genetics of anxiety disorders, and includes meta-analyses of studies

that highlight the similarity of findings so far across different anxiety subcategories. Anxiety is an area where animal models may be particularly relevant given the reasonably good anxiety and fear paradigms that exist, and a summary of findings from animal models and how these have or may potentially inform human studies would have been an interesting addition to the chapter.

Chapter 5 subdivides the research on substance use disorders into studies that examine alcohol use, nicotine use, and use of illicit drugs. The authors try to address whether genetic effects impact upon initiation as well as on dependence of substance use, whether genetic effects are substance-specific or shared across drug classes, and also whether genetic effects are shared across other psychiatric disorders. The authors also provide a description of the possible pathways by which genetic variation might impact upon substance use disorders.

In the final chapter genetic influences on anti-social behaviour are explored, with an interesting focus on effects across different developmental stages. The authors also attempt to tease out differences in genetic contribution between aggressive and non-aggressive or delinquent behaviour, as well as exploring sources of stability or change over time. There is also a summary of possible sources of heterogeneity across studies, as well as a description of putative gene-environment interactions that is likely to be of interest to readers across all fields of psychiatry.

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The Science of Well-being. Edited by F. Huppert, N. Baylis and B. Keverne. (Pp. 546; \$69.50; ISBN 0198567529 pb.) Oxford University Press: New York. 2005.

To start with the conclusion, I highly recommend this book. The volume contains a collection of papers from a diverse – yet impressive – group of scholars, including Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman, peace researcher and mediator Johan Galtung, political scientist Robert D. Putnam, epidemiologist David J. P. Barker, and psychologists Martin E. P. Seligman and Robert J. Sternberg. From different perspectives and

disciplines, they address questions such as: What is human well-being? What are the sources and consequences of happiness? How can well-being be increased?

The field of well-being has flourished in recent years – the *Zeitgeist* of positive psychology is evidenced by, for example, the launching of the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, and *Journal of Positive Psychology*. As explicated by Helliwell and Putnam, in chapter 17, a *prima facie* case can be made that the ultimate ‘dependent variable’ in social science should be human well-being. In 2003 a group of scholars took part in a discussion meeting on well-being at the Royal Society in London. Resulting from this successful meeting was a determination to publish the contributions together with an expanded set of texts.

Being far from a traditional psychiatry text book, the topics covered should be of interest to anyone curious about human nature, well-being, and mental health. The breadth and interdisciplinary nature of the book is, first of all, a strength. Admittedly, differing definitions and contrasting views can be confusing for readers unfamiliar with the field. However, taken together these different perspectives paint a rather detailed picture of the landscape of well-being research, and depict both the common ground and current controversies. Moreover, although not every chapter will be of equal interest to everyone, there is something there for everybody.

The book contains 20 chapters organized into five parts; (1) Evolution and development, (2) Physiology and neuroscience, (3) Psychology of well-being, (4) Cultural perspectives, and (5) Social and economic considerations. As examples, in part one, both Randolph M. Nesse and Eric B. Keverne elegantly apply an evolutionary perspective to the understanding of human well-being. Other chapters focus on the developmental origins of well-being (Barker) and successful ageing (Lupien and Wan).

In part two, Richard J. Davidson reviews research into the neural substrates and bio-behavioural correlates of well-being. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has contributed to identification of activation patterns and brain locations related to emotion regulation and affective styles. Other authors provide thorough reviews of how physical activity

(Biddle and Ekkakis) and nutrition (Gesch) are related to well-being.

Part three starts with Barbara L. Fredrickson’s elaboration of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. Joy, interest, contentment and love have important functions in terms of broadening thought-action repertoires and building enduring personal resources. Nick Baylis discusses coping strategies such as reality-evasion (e.g. escapist fantasy), quick-fixes (e.g. lying) and reality-investment (e.g. planning). Martin Seligman, Acacia Parks and Tracy Steen argue that the general construct of happiness comprises pleasure, engagement and meaning. Moreover, they review recent efforts to develop happiness-increasing interventions such as gratitude-related exercises, ‘count your blessings’ and ‘acts of kindness’ practices. Next, Kahneman and Riis ask why the French are much less happy than the Americans; actually the average French score at the same level of life satisfaction as the average unemployed American (despite e.g. the higher longevity of the French). They argue for the need to differentiate between the experiencing and the remembering self. Well-being is both about experiencing positive affect ‘on-line’, and evaluating and remembering life as has been. The French–American discrepancy is explained by linguistic and cultural norms for evaluation and reporting (remembering self), and there is no reason to expect differences in the experiencing self. Finally, Felicia Huppert addresses issues of genetic and environmental effects (however, with a slightly critical view on behaviour genetic research), stability and change, intervention strategies, and relations between well-being and mental disorders.

Part four includes important chapters on work-related well-being (Verducci and Gardner), intelligence, culture and well-being (Sternberg and Grigorenko), social policies and tailored interventions (Delle Fave and Massimini), and the human connection to nature (Burns).

Finally in part five, Helliwell and Putnam discuss community and national level sources of well-being, including the Swedish puzzle: a country ranking high on both average life satisfaction and suicide rates. The explanation includes the notion of national levels of belief in God (low in Sweden) as protective for suicide, whereas quality of government (high) is more

important for life satisfaction. Johan Galtung puts well-being in a wider context of peace and development. His own experience of high well-being, meaningfulness and strong sensory experiences during imprisonment as a conscientious objector to military service, and references to Buddhist and Chinese thinking, represent a refreshing breath. Robert H. Frank asks if money can buy happiness, and in the last chapter, Nic Marks and Hetan Shah suggest a well-being manifesto for a flourishing society.

This book is not primarily about psychiatric illness, but could be seen as comprising an expanded mental health perspective. Well-being is both about the absence of disorders and distress, and the presence of positive experiences and conditions. The nature, causes and consequences of illness is not the main focus here. Yet, several topics covered, such as psychological development and ageing, neural substrates of affective states, gene-environment issues, and well-being-enhancing interventions, have important implications for prevention and treatment of disorders. This is not a psychiatric illness book in disguise; it's a full-blooded well-being volume. As such it has the potential of complementing the typical illness-focused text in understanding human nature, and thereby to be of interest to both researchers and clinicians in fields such as psychiatry and psychology.

In summary, from a diverse set of viewpoints the different authors contribute with solid reviews and new thinking, resulting in a state-of-the-art text. The book provides new insights – or perhaps ‘newsights’ – empirically, theoretically and philosophically. In addition, the book is fun to read, and what's better than a well-being book activating the reader's joy and enthusiasm? Thus; recommended.

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The Origins and Course of Common Mental Disorders. By D. Goldberg and I. Goodyer. (Pp. 230; £13.99; ISBN 1583919600 pb.) Taylor & Francis: Basingstoke, UK. 2005.

This book in four parts and 12 chapters describes the origins and course of common mental disorders covering epidemiology, diagnosis and

neurobiology throughout the human life cycle. It ultimately provides a developmental model for understanding these illnesses, their management and prevention and this is precisely why the book is marvellous. It addresses, or at least attempts to address everything, providing a wealth of knowledge in palatable form. In order to achieve this, the authors assume that the reader is broadly conversant with the main issues within mental health and this allows them to have an intelligent conversation rather than regurgitate facts. Having said this there is no paucity of information. Facts, figures and tables are employed suitably throughout and the text is richly referenced. Diagrams and tables are basic by design, enhancing clarity and maintaining an uncluttered feel to the text. This is an important point, which makes the book very much more accessible. I found it surprisingly easy to read as it flows naturally engaging you in a free-flowing debate. This aspect of the book should not be underestimated. Leon Eisenberg who provides a foreword to the book comments that it ‘is written in a remarkably lucid style’ but goes on to caution against interpretation of this to mean simple or unoriginal. To this end the authors have actively striven to make the material accurate and interesting and as such do not refrain from injecting personal opinion.

The overall structure of the book is logical with sections following a ‘natural’ order from nature and biology to the life cycle and consideration of potential models. Links are made between the various chapters and this highlights another couple of strengths of the book namely ‘style’ and ‘syntheses’. Having only two authors as opposed to the current trend of dozens of contributors grants the reader a sense of familiarity and allows the development of a relationship. Becoming accustomed and comfortable with grammatical style makes the task of understanding the content considerably easier. In essence this is an easy book to read and absorb.

More significantly, however, this book is not a mere reflection of current ideas nor is it a sophisticated summary. It comprises new material in the form of interpretation and inference and arms the reader with a new perspective on mental disorders. It reminds us that illness is patient-based and that population statistics do not capture everyone with a particular diagnosis. Furthermore, we are shown that

diagnostic categories are heterogenous and urged to consider the pros and cons of dimensional and categorical approaches.

To assist in consolidating ideas, the authors conclude each chapter in the book with a useful box that contains 'take-home messages'. Hence, I shall do the same. My take-home message as regards this book, written by two of psychiatry's leading minds, is simple. Buy this book and read it because you will enjoy doing so, and in doing so will learn from it far more than you will have anticipated. Then talk to others about your new-found ideas and ask them to copy you and obtain a copy.

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Social Capital and Mental Health. Edited by K. McKenzie and T. Harpham. (Pp. 176; £25.00; ISBN 1843103559.) Jessica Kingsley: London, 2006.

I had some initial misgivings when asked to review a new book – *Social Capital and Mental Health*. My knowledge of the area indicated that it was enormously problematical particularly with respect to the development of good measures of the concepts involved. The results of recent good studies, using appropriate sampling and multi-level modelling, showed little explanation of variance in mental illness beyond the individual and household level, particularly in adulthood. Not a promising area for a book. However, the topic has seemingly captured the imagination of many outside this specialized research field and perhaps a book could do something useful to sober such waves of optimism. A quick read of the first few pages and the concluding part of the book by the editors on 'the State of the Art' did much to assuage my concerns. The editors are clearly aware of the disappointments and pitfalls facing interested researchers, policy and decision makers.

The book is sensibly structured in three parts. The first section on theory, as expected, summarizes the meanings and uses of the term social capital, and the research methods used. In Part 2 there are descriptions of studies in five parts of the world including two in developing countries, Zambia and Colombia.

For me there are two questions to be answered: first, is this really a new concept and, second, is there evidence that it accounts for determinants of mental health when other established factors have also been considered? Much that is heralded as research on social capital is not very different from a range of previously established extra-individual concepts such as those based on social network theory, a disappointment that this book does not slip into. Thus, the argument that social capital is conceptually a distinct advance upon social network theory is argued on the basis of the example of Robert Putnam's work on Regional Government in Italy. Putnam's ideas centre on the value of local civic identity and trust as manifested in the investment by communities in facilities that are open and shared by its members (whether or not at an individual level trust and sharing is low or high).

However, when new concepts emerge they require new measures and new study designs including surveys and intervention evaluations. Survey methodologies would need to be married to wide area (e.g. regional) geographic evaluations, not to mind potentially subjective, qualitative judgements. This would seem to call for new survey data, which is hard to realize faced with the temptation to use old data although collected for different reasons. It was reassuring, but still disappointing, therefore, to find the authors concluding that existing measures do not match the specific requirements and aspirations of the concept (chapter 3). Particularly fascinating was the finding of research carried out in Maastricht, The Netherlands, showing neighbourhood-level social capital effects on mental health in adolescents and adults but not on treatment of psychiatric morbidity in adults. Also fascinating was a small study in Cali in which there was an attempt to measure social capital in a controlled intervention study. Both these studies are particularly worthy of closer reading.

In conclusion, if social capital is on your research, policy or decision-making mental health agenda this book is essential to you. But this book also deserves a wider audience of readers interested in keeping up with knowledge and ideas on the social context of mental health.

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