

## Independent comment on Audiovisual and Print Materials

### Collaborative Practice in Psychology and Therapy

Ed. David A. Paré and Glenn Lerner.  
NY, Haworth, 2004.

Soft cover. 278pp. ISBN 0 7890 1786.  
US\$34.95.

**This book is an important and useful** read for anyone who claims to practise narrative (postmodern, constructivist therapy), or indeed any therapist who, self-reflectively, grapples with the tension between postmodernist assertions<sup>1</sup> and his/her own hard-won sense of practising in an effective way, based on empirical studies and lived experience. This in effect, means all currently practising therapists.

Postmodern thought arose as a critique of modernism. It came to reject modernist notions of truth and theory; having made this move, the question postmodernists face is how they can write anything that might serve as a positive guide (scary, shades of positivism!) to other practitioners. How can one write postmodern theory if the very idea of promoting any idea of practice beyond a description of some local, contextually based experience of interaction is ruled unacceptable on philosophical (? theoretical) grounds? This book reflects, documents and actualises this struggle, both in what it fails to, and in what it does, address.

Lerner and Paré advocate 'a view of all psychological practices as relationship characterised by the mutual exchange of knowledge and meaning' (3). To explicate this view, they have collected some 18 pieces from a variety of social constructionists. The chapters are arranged in four sections, Theory (Without Violence), Therapy (Knowing With), Supervision/Training (Relational) and finally, Research (Collaborative).

In her opening chapter of the theory section, Sheila McNamee confronts one aspect of the postmodern dilemma: she wishes to share her ideas without the 'relationship violence' she attributes to modernist, logical, truth-seeking through debate; in contrast she wishes to make (con-

ceptual) overtures in recognition of the constructivist insight that 'meaning is not an individual phenomenon ... it is an achievement of people coordinating their activities together' (Paré & Lerner: 11–13). In the process she accuses science of being the problem. Reflecting on my frustration with this, to my mind, unjustified attack on science led me to start to get a handle on the postmodern problem typified by this author, and for that I am grateful.

MacNamee seems to confuse and conflate two paths: the difficult path of searching for truth about the natural world (scientific method) and the at times, equally difficult path of finding mutual meaning and understanding that arises out of empathic relationships (relating, conversing; cf. Gadamer and Lyotard).

In Chapter 2, Shawver revisits the terrible problem I faced when training in the early 1970s: Eysenck had devastatingly argued that psychotherapy methods were indistinguishable in their ineffectiveness, thereby invalidating our dream of becoming scientific practitioners. The resolution seemed to come with the findings of Truax and Carkhuff, that outcome research needed to take into account the efficacy of the therapists, specifically their capacity for empathy, genuineness and warmth (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Shawver ignores/forgets this scientific resolution of part of the problem. However, she is not content with the nihilism of 'anything goes'. Her answer is the 'hope' she finds in an affirmative postmodernism, inspired by Lyotard and Wittgenstein philosophically, and embodied in the writings of, for example, Harlene Anderson and John Shotter on therapy. Interestingly, she contrasts this type of postmodernism with the nihilism she sees in the work of Michael White and Steve de Shazer who she sees as post-structuralists, '... inspired by Foucault ... and the hope of revisioning the historical ... narratives' (Paré & Lerner: 29). Her answer is 'paralogy', which is apparently characterised by 'Tiotoling' (it rhymes with 'yodeling'), Generous Listening, and Positional Fluidity (Paré & Lerner: 31–33)! I will leave it to you to read the book, and decide for yourself how much Tiotoling, Generous Listening and

Positional Fluidity really advance your understanding, and ability to practise, beyond the exhortation to practise and relate with empathy, genuineness and nonpossessive warmth.

In Chapter 3, Jon Amundson, a Calgary psychologist, writes an interesting piece about 'The Psychotherapeutic Tradition of William James' (41–54), where he makes James work in support of radical empiricism, that is, he argues for ideas that 'get some work done in the real world' (Paré & Lerner: 45). Ah, I think, here is someone who understands my frustration with 'establishment ideology'. Then came the frustration of the closing sentence: 'Perhaps with the humility of a more pragmatic orientation in our work we can leave theories and models behind, and just be useful'. How are we ever going to be able to evaluate our usefulness if we (ideologically) abandon scientific method? Indeed Amundson's 'common factors related to change' were arrived at originally by scientific studies such as the work of Truax and Carkhuff (1967). Why can't we be both pragmatists *and* scientists, in keeping with McNamee's pleading for theory as a generative resource and her 'ethic of hospitality?' (Paré & Lerner: 2, 4)?

There are many important pieces on therapy, supervision and research in the later sections of this book. I have focused on a critique of the theory section of the book because this is where postmodernists seem most confused and bewitched by their own rhetoric and are most likely to unknowingly throw the (theory) baby out with the (colonialist) bathwater, a practice that can only end in disaster for therapists and patients. This book provides a critical reader with revealing insights into their and our struggle, and need, for truth *and* meaning.

#### Endnote

1. I have to use 'assertion' because postmodern writers reject 'theory'.

#### Reference

Truax B. & Carkhuff, R. R., 1967, *Toward Effective Counselling and Psychotherapy*, Chicago, Aldine.

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## Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, NY, Oxford, OUP, 2003.

Soft cover. pp. 545. ISBN 0 19 515775 3. \$90.00.

**My first thought in approaching this** text was how it would stack up against the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) — the qualitative research ‘bible’. I recognised many of the names: Lincoln, Guba, Harding, Van Maanen, Denzin, Richardson and Charmaz. I was both surprised and delighted to see bell hooks’ name. I scanned the chapter titles and they were strikingly familiar. The 27 chapters are a collection of previously published work designed as a reader for a postgraduate course and addressing four areas:

- distinguishing qualitative research from other paradigms
- researcher positionality and interaction within research
- unobtrusive methods, including cultural studies; and
- analysis, interpretation and writing of qualitative research.

Guba and Lincoln’s chapter on distinguishing qualitative research is probably one of the most important in getting your bearings. They have repeatedly written about competing paradigms in research and this is another good rendition. They emphasise that the most important distinction in research is not the so-called quantitative/qualitative divide, but between our paradigms — our basic set of beliefs about our world that are identified by considering our ontological, epistemological and then methodological position. Methods are subordinate to methodology, theory and epistemology. Guba and Lincoln helpfully compare a range of paradigms frequently found in contemporary qualitative research. However, if you are interested in combining quantitative and qualitative approaches then two chapters are devoted to the topic.

Nine chapters in Section II are focused on positionality within qualita-

tive research — something that equally concerns us as therapists. Most consciously move us into a reflexive and critical zone that is not enamoured of essentialist notions and modernist assumptions, that is, objectivity. Here are two examples. Bell hooks sets the scene by critiquing a book on the politics of ethnography dominated by white and mostly male researchers/writers. She argues it is unacceptable for us to acknowledge, or use as the source of knowledge, marginalised groups to further our own career yet do nothing to ensure that members of these groups are accorded the right to speak for themselves. Gallagher’s chapter ‘White like Me?’ explores how white people in America understand their whiteness. He takes another slice on accountability by explaining our responsibility as researchers (or therapists) not to assume that our apparent commonalities with participants/clients are always an asset. Our commonalities may blind us to other important distinctions or support us in being complicit with ideas that maintain structures of domination, such as racism.

The five chapters in Section II have a technical and methodological slant, focusing on analysing text, visual and media images. I was drawn more to Section IV on interpretation and writing. Denzin, as always, is instructive in outlining the art and politics of interpretation. Although his focus is on qualitative research, it is salutary for family therapists whose days are filled with doing case studies of families or networks. Whether in dialogue or writing we must decide how to tell the story or narrative of our interpretations in a way that the people affected can recognise the story yet gain something useful and new from it.

Richardson’s ideas about writing are both inspiring and liberating. She considers:

... writing as a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic. Although we usually think about writing as a mode of ‘telling’ about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of ‘knowing’ — a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable (473).

Her chapter outlines the history of research writing and postmodernist possibilities for qualitative writing, followed by a set of writing practices that you can use to expand your repertoire, and therefore your ‘knowing’ of your subject.

In sum, this book certainly does not supersede the qualitative research ‘bible’, but if you have never done a postgraduate course and want to sharpen your research knowledge — whether to better understand and critique what you read, become a researcher, or explore the everyday research that is the business of family therapy — then it is worth a read. It is also significantly cheaper than the ‘bible’, at around 20–25% the cost!!

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### Reference

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y., 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edn), Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

## Technology in Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Practitioner’s Guide.

S. Goss & K. Anthony (Eds). NY, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Paperback. pp. 217 incl. index. ISBN 1403900604. £16.99.

**Psychotherapists, including family therapists,** are increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities that new technology and especially Internet-based technology offers. To some extent, the use of e-mail, Internet chat and other forms of electronic communication draw on a preexisting therapeutic tradition, especially that of the therapeutic letter. However the immediacy of contemporary text communication introduces both possibilities and risks that take us beyond the therapeutic letter and require a serious rethinking of practice frameworks.

This book is a welcome addition to a growing library of works that aim to contribute to practitioner knowledge and skill in relation to use of new technology. It is ambitious in scope, covering video and telephone communication as well as electronic text communication and

Internet-based and multimedia self-help. Supervision and therapy using the various media are discussed in reasonable detail. As the title suggests, it aims to be a handbook of practical value to the practitioner rather than a discursive text. Practical and ethical issues in use of technology are considered in useful detail, often illustrated with clinical examples.

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While this is a worthwhile book and one that any therapist considering extensive use of new technology should consult, there are some weaknesses and limitations. Family therapists will be disappointed to discover no specific discussion of the use of technology in family therapy. While some of the principles that apply in individual and group therapy are transferable, quite specific opportunities and issues arise in the family therapy context — and these are not covered. As is the case with many books with multiple authors, there are significant stylistic variations. Some chapters have a strong practitioner focus and are well illustrated with vignettes or examples. Others are more discursive and of less practical value. The writing team is UK based and there is a certain insularity in the work which overlooks the very important work of the Stanford group on the use of the Internet with breast cancer groups and eating disorders and the pioneering work of Australia's Kids Help Line in online counselling for young people.

To remain serviceable, it is a work that will need constant updates and I look forward to a second edition.

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## Gene–Environment Processes in Social Behaviours and Relationships.

K. Deater-Deckard & S.A. Petrill (Eds). NY, Haworth, 2001.

*Soft cover. pp. 293. ISBN 0 7890 1957 4. US\$34.95. (Co-published simultaneously as Marriage and Family Review, Vol 33, Nos. 1–3, 2001).*

**This publication continues the long line** of ‘separates’ published by *Marriage and Family Review*. Its thirteen chapters cover the current research findings relating genetics to behaviour. The final conclusions may surprise therapists.

Instead of asking if genetics is important, it is now more appropriate to ask whether there is a behavioural dimension or disorder that does not show genetic influence (274).

Being simultaneously published in a journal, these papers show marked variation, mainly in the use of terminology. There is also excessive repetition as each author reviews much of the same literature. Initially I found the papers heavy going due to the foreign (to me) use of terminology but, as I continued, the flow and logic became easier. As the editors note, the book needs careful reading. Some of the papers have complex statistics, which may prove difficult for the reader without a statistical background. However it is worth persevering.

Will reading this book change your therapy? Probably not, but it does provide an impetus to shift the focus slightly. What arises from this book is the power of the ‘nonshared environment’ in ‘causing’ differences in sibling behaviour. For researchers, it provides a foundation for studies that separate out the shared environment, the nonshared environment and genetics. For families, it offers hope in that current evidence suggests that genetics has a strong influence on negative child behaviours, while positive behaviours have more to do with parenting, and good parenting can positively influence negative genetics.

Who should read this book? I would recommend that all therapists read the final chapter. It draws together the results of the research in a readable account. This may stimulate some

readers to explore further. All researchers on behaviour and family should read the book from cover to cover. The other group that should read this book are the journalists who regularly report that the gene that causes a given behaviour has been discovered. This book puts paid to that idea.

In summary this book provides an interesting insight into current research and offers explanations for differences in behaviour that we see in the families we treat. Remember, it is not nature or nurture, it is both.

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## Bodywise: A Family Group Program for Child Obesity.

Kristine Moxley, Simone Abbott, Lisa Clement, Ben Schueler, Vanessa Richardson. Child & Adolescent Development Unit, Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital, Wentworth Area Health Service, 2003.

*No ISBN. No price. The kit consists of three items in a clear plastic wallet: Manual 1: Program Guide and Parents' Sessions. 48 pp. Spiral bound. Manual 2: Children's Sessions. 24 pp. Spiral bound. CD-ROM: Resources, handouts, presentations, letters, forms and questionnaires. For information, contact Kristine Moxley Ph. +61 2 4784 6671 Fax + 61 2 4784 6988.*

**Bodywise is a program which aims to** improve the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of obese and overweight children aged 8–12 years. One way to approach the problem of childhood obesity is to focus on the overweight child, but this approach, which involves the whole family and attends to issues of self-esteem, social and school issues, and lifestyle changes, is infinitely more sensible. The focus is on family participation and sustainable family lifestyle changes, rather than on short-term weight loss in the individual child.

Both parents and children attend twice-weekly sessions after school over a period of five weeks. Each week, the whole family attends one group session of enjoyable noncompetitive physical activity. In the other weekly session, children and

adults participate in separate educational activities/discussions on topics such as nutrition, physical activity, self-esteem, change management and the family unit. Follow-up sessions for families are offered three, six, and twelve months after the initial five-week program.

The kit is colourful, well presented, and complete. Everything one might need to facilitate the program is provided, including information sheets, handouts, resources for use in the sessions, and various forms. Attractive PowerPoint presentations for use in the sessions are provided (and these are also offered in the form of overhead projector slides). *Manual 1* lists additional requirements, such as physical space, equipment, resources and staffing. The manuals outline the learning objectives for each

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session, and clearly list the various activities with the time frame required for these. There is adequate information on each session, but not too much detail to make the outline unworkable, and the format is easy to follow.

As I have been unable to try out this program as facilitator, I contribute the following thoughts based on my knowledge and experience of facilitating various group programs for primary school children and adults. The design of the program has several strengths. A major one is that the whole family is involved in the movement toward change. Too often, children are treated as if they exist on the planet unconnected to, and uninfluenced by, anyone else, and of course if only the child is singled out for treatment for their obesity, sustainable change may not occur, a negative connotation may be attached to the child, and an opportunity may also be lost to influence other members of the family in a positive way. Another strength is the exposure of the whole family to weekly sessions

of physical activity (indoor rock climbing, aqua-aerobics or bushwalking are some suggestions), designed to give the family an opportunity to experiment with new physical experiences. This is likely to have a positive social benefit, as these activities are held in the family's local community. I think the outline for the children's sessions is excellent, having a good mix of active games and thoughtful exercises, and the creative theme of the children designing their own planet in the group's universe is a great thread running throughout the five weeks. I also like the plan of having the parents join the children for the final few minutes of some of the separate sessions. This is likely to keep parents in touch with what is happening in the children's group; sometimes parents feel shut out of the process unless some effort is made to keep them in. The adult sessions are well designed to support and extend the work done in the children's sessions, focusing on family wellbeing as well as healthy eating and physical activity. Finally, the program attends to issues of bullying and teasing in a respectful and practical manner.

The niggling difficulties I had with the program were insignificant. First, I found accessing the material in the kit a little overwhelming at first. This was probably because some of the material was on CD-ROM, when I am more accustomed to seeing it in printed form, and others who have moved with the times may not have the same difficulty.

Second, while the authors *recommend* that two people facilitate the children's session, they state that a minimum of one person is required. I think that two facilitators for the children's groups are absolutely necessary, and the groups should not be attempted otherwise, as several of the children's sessions involve small group work, and when working with children the unexpected often happens. Though unfortunately I cannot comment on the time required for the content of this program, I think that facilitators should be aware that some of the planned activities may need to be altered if a process issue emerges — for example, teasing within the group — which needs to be addressed with the group in that session. Finally, I would like to see information about evaluation of the program, which appears to have been done, but which has not been included in the kit.

It was a pleasure to see such a carefully thought-out program, so

well-designed and presented. My congratulations to the authors.

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## Mates Traits Cards.

Conceived by Russell Deal,  
illustrated by Mat Jones, and  
edited by Karen Masman. Bendigo,  
Victoria, St. Luke's Innovative  
Resources, 2003.

*Cards and 24-page booklet. \$46.75, incl. GST.*

*Mates Traits* is a set of activity cards about friendship, in the tradition of St Luke's other strengths-based resources like *Scales: Tools for Change*, *Bear Cards*, *Strength Cards*, and *'I Can' Monster Cards*. *Mates Traits* is a deck of 32, 12-centimetre square, colourful cards. Each card is labelled with an aspect of friendship and is illustrated with a humorous cartoon featuring Australian animal characters. For example, in the card 'We care about others', two koala bears bandage a kangaroo's foot. The design of the cards is appealing to primary school children, and the humour of the cards may extend their appeal to parents and adolescents.

*Mates Traits* comes with a booklet of suggested uses. Single cards could be used by teachers to promote the 'trait of the week'. A single deck can be spread out on a table to generate individual or group discussion on making and keeping friends. Two decks of cards can be used to play 'friendship memory' or 'friendship go-fish'. There are also *Mates Traits* stickers and a colour-in book to expand the friendship work.

The cards highlight friendship themes like play, celebration, sharing, cooperation, communication, conflict, and trust. The cards also express some of the polarities of friendship: laughter and crying, conflict and forgiveness, being together and being separate, being similar and being different. Some of the cards do seem to repeat the same theme. For example, 'We care about each other' and 'We care about others'. Some other useful themes could have been included like: 'We take turns', 'We play fairly', and 'We talk about our problems'.

The language of some cards may be difficult for younger primary schoolers. For example, 'We have our moments', 'We give

each other space', and 'We struggle together'. More concrete phrases might be helpful, for example: 'We sometimes argue', 'We can play by ourselves', and 'We work together'. Of course, it is hard to find a phrase that is clear to every child. In any case, exploring a card's meaning can be a useful part of the counselling process.

I have used *Mates Traits* with a ten-year-old boy with a mild developmental delay and a history of aggressive behaviour toward siblings and peers. I read out each card and I asked him to say what was happening in the cartoons (to make sure he got the concept being expressed). We then used the cards to explore the qualities of friendship he currently possessed. We were then able to identify key friendship skills that he could develop, which I hoped would reduce his aggressive behaviour.

The *Mates Traits Cards* are another very practical tool from St Luke's for engaging children (and their parents) in strengths-based work. The cards seem very compatible with other solution-focused strategies, cognitive-behavioural programs, and social skills curricula. According to the booklet, *Mates Traits* was 'developed in the shadow of September 11 and the Bali bombings'. It aims to be one small antidote to hatred, terrorism, and war — if not at a global level, then certainly in the schoolyard, the playground, and the home.

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## Our Scrapbook of Strengths.

St Luke's Innovative Resources  
and Family Action Centre, Faculty  
of Health, University of Newcastle.

42 laminated full-colour cards, 230 x 170 mm  
with drilled holes presented in a screenprinted,  
polypropylene ring binder. \$49.95, incl. GST.

**This scrapbook provides an addition to** the Strength Cards produced by St Luke's. Unlike previous cards it provides the opportunity for groups as well as individuals to identify strengths and areas for change. Although it focuses primarily on the strengths of families, it could also be used to identify strengths in other groups such as organisations and teams.

I made use of the scrapbook for an adult couple when exploring the family strengths they had used to overcome difficult times. The resource could have easily been used in conjunction with their primary and high school aged children. It proved useful in identifying overall family strengths but also worked well when we explored what each family member personally contributed to this strength. The couple also thought it was useful in identifying areas for change and quickly identified qualities that they 'definitely' did not have.

The scrapbook format provides a manageable alternative to the use of a pack of cards; however, it sometimes made it difficult to relocate previously selected cards without removing them from the book. The graphics are bright and appealing, although I found the use of small stylised writing in some places difficult to read and a little distracting. Overall the scrapbook provides a useful extension to the existing range of St Luke's products.

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## Stones ... have Feelings Too!

Conceived by Russell Deal,  
illustrated by Ray Bowler, and  
edited by Karen Masman. Bendigo,  
Victoria, St. Luke's Innovative  
Resources, 2003.

\$49.50, incl. GST. Stickers also available,  
\$16.95, incl. GST.

***Stones ... have Feelings Too!* is another** set of activity cards produced by St Luke's Innovative Resources. Like St Luke's *Bear Cards*, *Stones* is designed to facilitate exploration of emotions.

*Stones* is a colourful deck of 52 10x15-centimetre, laminated cards. Each card pictures a stone cartoon character representing an emotion. On the reverse side of each card are three suggested emotions the stone might depict. There are no words on the front of the card, so the user can interpret the picture freely. *Stones* comes with a booklet of suggested uses, which encourages flexible and creative use rather than prescriptive use. The cards can be used to explore individual feelings, mapping of family feelings, family 'sculpture' work, or to explore

group developmental stages. The cards can be used selectively.

Initially, we had some concern that many of the illustrations seem obscure. Part of the problem is that the facial expressions, postures, gestures, and setting of the stones are sometimes ambiguous. Children may describe many cards as 'happy' or 'sad' because they focus on the perceptible smile or frown on the stone. Also, some symbolic thinking is required to understand, for example, that a stone with a hole in it suggests feeling 'hollow', 'empty' or 'drained'. However, in our individual work with children, we found they readily made their own interpretation of the cards. They enjoyed the activity and described the cards as: 'cute', 'fun', 'a funny puzzle', 'hard [to work out] but fun', 'really cool', and 'something different'.

We used the cards to good effect in a domestic violence group for children 7–11 years of age. All 52 cards were laid out. Each child was asked to choose a card that represented their feelings about the group closing, and then to describe their feelings. The children found the cards interesting and funny. The cards suited the various personalities in the group. The children freely expressed what they saw in the cards and were not distracted by the words on the back. The children's 'feedback' was also useful in evaluating the group. The ambiguity of many of the cards turned out to be useful, because the children could use the cards to describe idiosyncratic or ambivalent feelings. It also helps the counsellor avoid assumptions and prescriptions.

*Stones* may be more appealing to men and boys because they are not so 'cute' as the *Bear Cards*. *Stones* may be better suited to upper primary children, adolescents, and adults: clients who have a reasonable vocabulary of feelings and some abstract thinking ability.

St Luke's have taken the concept a step further by producing a set of stone figures. *A Pocket of Stones* is a set of twelve hand-crafted, ceramic heads, each one with a different shape and a different facial expression. This adds a three-dimensional tactile element that would appeal to children and adults alike.

**Anne McCrea and Lyn Browne**

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## Toddler Taming.

Rev. edn. Christopher Green.  
Sydney, Doubleday, 2001.

Paperback. 352 pp. inc. index.  
ISBN 186471 0535. \$22.95.

## Toddler Taming Tips.

Christopher Green. Sydney,  
Doubleday, 2003.

Pp. 160. ISBN 186471 0756. \$14.95.

In this revised edition of *Toddler Taming*, Dr Green provides parents with a real gem. This is a practical down-to-earth guide for parents, giving them some ideas of what is normal, what is annoying and what to expect when parenting a toddler. The book notes that it is a new and revised version, but I was unable to find any differences except in the language and the easy-to-use summaries at the end of each chapter.

Dr Green emphasises that parents should relax and enjoy their children, rather than hot-housing them or worrying about every insignificant detail of their lives (such as fingers up their noses). He gives tips on how to avoid arguments with toddlers, on the grounds that many problems settle with time. He notes the positives and negatives of smacking and while he does not condone it, gives practical points for those parents who wish to do so. He gives a brief, yet comprehensive guide to healthy eating and sleeping as well as common illnesses and concerns.

*Toddler Taming Tips* (2003), really is new, and I think it is worth giving to new parents or perhaps having it readily available in the hospital nursery bundles. *Tips* (smaller, glove box or handbag-size book), written in point form, is a summary of the larger book. I would think it unnecessary for a parent to buy both, unless they wanted more details on normal child development, which are provided in the more expanded copy. I would recommend these books for all parents from all walks of life. The humour and the information is valuable for both the highly anxious parent who is fastidious about every move their child makes, and the less sensitive laid-back parent, who misses the important details of their child (as well as all the parents in between). This is a book I will place in my waiting room. Well done, Christopher Green!

**Lyn Worsley**

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## Great Ideas for (Tired) Parents.

Michael Grose, Sydney, Random  
House, 1994.

Soft cover. 220 pp. ISBN: 1-74051-023-2.  
\$22.73.

## One Step Ahead: Raising 3–12 Year Olds.

Rev. edn. Michael Grose. Sydney,  
Random House Australia, 2000.

Soft cover. 381 pp. (very large, easy to read  
print), ISBN: 1-74051-026-7. \$24.55.

*One Step Ahead* is divided into two sections. The first ten chapters introduce the principles of democratic parenting. Section 2, A–Z, Strategies for Promoting Independence and Dealing with Problem Behaviour, addresses specific problems, including attention seeking, argumentativeness, bed wetting, bullying, chores, lies, personal hygiene, shyness, routines, and concludes with a chapter on puberty. Grose offers a framework for parenting in a world where traditional ways are no longer acceptable or effective. Democratic parenting consists of wise leadership and guidance, stimulation, encouragement, firmness, consistency, constructive communication, calm problem solving and effective behaviour management. The parent–child relationship is characterised by mutual respect, co-operation, shared responsibility and social equality. The aim of democratic parenting is to help children develop into responsible, self-reliant, independent individuals, who find their place in a pluralistic society. Grose offers many practical ideas for tackling developmental and behavioural challenges, using a resourceful and non-punitive approach.

*Great Ideas for (Tired) Parents* also offers parenting strategies but, in addition, focuses on parental physical, mental and spiritual well-being. The thirteen chapters cover a wide range of topics, including parental self-care; non-punitive approaches when dealing with misbehaviour; setting of goals, planning, routines; dealing with high stress situations; relationship-building via effective communication and shared enjoy-

ment, and finally issues for sole-parents, step-parents, and blended families.

*One Step Ahead* in particular is based on Adlerian theory, further developed by Dreikurs, and is similar to the STEP Program (Dinkmeyer & McKay 1976/1989). For my liking, the model is somewhat deterministic. The purpose of child problem behaviour (internalising and externalising) is frequently seen in terms of attention/power hunger and striving for dominance by displaying inadequacy. Links are also made between birth order and psychological development. These explanations do not reflect the results of child development research of the past 30–40 years, for example, transactional models of development, or attachment theory.

Michael Grose's books are self-help for parents, still available in spite of their publication dates. Both are suitable for parents searching for new parenting strategies, especially parents with an ability to reflect and evaluate their relationships with important others. I am less certain whether highly stressed parents who encounter more severe problems can benefit. The volumes can serve as a resource for professionals new to the field of child/family counselling and teaching, as many practical and creative ideas of dealing with child and relationship problems are given. A good place for the books would be the shelves of council libraries.

**Ingeborg Stiefel**

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## Every Kid (Parenting Your 5 to 12 Year Old).

Brent Waters and Liz Kennedy.  
Sydney, Doubleday, 2001. Revised  
and updated edn. First edition  
published in 1993.

Soft cover. 246 pp. ISBN: 186471-051-9.  
\$22.95.

'How do I get my child to co-operate or listen or do chores or get on with siblings, or do homework?' *Every Kid*, answering all these familiar questions, is an easy to read, informative book for parents and new practitioners, written by a child psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist. They claim that little is written for this age group, as they

are seen as the easy-peasy group between the more oppositional and challenging toddlers and teens. However parenting the five to twelves certainly does present difficulties and is time-intensive.

The early chapters focus on development, the aims of parenting and the pressures on both adults and children in normal day-to-day life and in crises like family breakdowns. Behaviour Modification Techniques describe how to discipline and reward children effectively. The Cognitive Therapy of Emotions underpins a good chapter on managing children's emotions. On reading this, parents would understand how thoughts affect feelings and how to turn unhelpful thoughts to helpful ones.

The 'common problems' chapter includes pocket-money, doing chores, tidying rooms, lying, swearing, and getting homework done. The underlying philosophy is of teaching children to be responsible by enforcing and rewarding positive behaviours and allowing children to experience the consequences of their behaviour. An interesting chapter on the 'Electronic Entertainment Revolution' discusses myths and realities, what is good or bad for children and how parents can set restrictions. *Every Kid* recognises the strong impact of the social milieu and provides techniques for helping children to develop good social skills.

I must confess to finding the authors' approach somewhat clinical with the measuring, scores and charts (e.g. practical samples of designing goal setting and problem solving charts). Although the management techniques are logical, they require tough love at times in the pursuit of consistency. For example, to implement good learning habits, Waters and Kennedy say that to earn recreation in the afternoon, children have to finish their study first. Some of the techniques would be difficult to put into practice if the parent-child relationship were basically poor. It would have been helpful to include segments on dealing with a child who is aggressive, a bully or has ADHD.

Overall though, *Every Kid* is valuable, and a good resource to recommend to parents.

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## Exploring the Unsaid: Creativity, Risks, and Dilemmas in Working Cross-Culturally.

Barry Mason & Alice Sawyerr  
(Eds). London, Karnac, 2002.  
Systemic Thinking and Practice  
Series.

Soft Cover. 186 pp. ISBN: 1 85575 290 5.  
£19.99.

I have 'sat on' this book for ages, treasuring it in a way that has made me reluctant to perform the reviewer's dissecting task. And yet, I want others to read it. So it makes no sense to hoard it, silently acting out the title, *Exploring the Unsaid*. I was favourably disposed to the book from the outset, having attended workshops and lectures by Barry Mason, who will be well known to many readers of this journal.

The book has an interesting origin, having been inspired by a family therapy conference of the same name. The London-based editors were amongst a group of eight practitioners planning that conference. This book arises from discussions over a four-year period in which they explored their own risk-taking behaviour as they confronted dilemmas in crosscultural therapeutic work. The contributors to their conference, whose enthusiasm motivated them to compile the conference papers, are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

The text is presented in four sections; the first, in keeping with the systemic origins of the editors, addresses context. This is followed by two chapters dealing with theoretical perspectives and another section of five chapters grouped together as 'Practice Perspectives'. Again and again, the focus is on sameness/difference and uncertainty and risk-taking for the therapist. The final section consists of two chapters under the heading of 'Personal and Professional Perspectives'.

Nancy Boyd-Franklin contributes a marvellous foreword in which she captures the essence of what is special about the book. 'The authors call upon us', she states, 'to begin by viewing all therapeutic work as a negotiation or an exchange of values and cultures between the therapist and the client', calling this a

paradigmatic shift [which] effectively transports us beyond the rigid frame

of cultural stereotypes to the freeing post-modern conceptualisation of creative conversations between the therapist and the client about cultural issues (xiv).

She goes on to identify the other levels at which the book speaks to us, including the importance of self-examination and personal risk-taking and then extending such explorations and risk-taking to exchanges with our own colleagues in mixed team work and between mental health professionals of different cultures. The final challenge of the book as identified by Boyd-Franklin is that of working towards institutional and organisational change.

One of the concepts addressed through practice examples early in the book is the different orientation for members of cultures which are individualistic and those which are collectivist. Attention is drawn to the potential for interventions which are 'useless if not abusive' of ethnic minority clients from collectivist cultures who are assessed by their western therapists as submissive, passive, oppressed or enmeshed. The example is given of such an individual being readily offered assertiveness training, which '... is inimical to therapeutic success since the family and its individual members function more as a single, integral unit' (25).

The concluding chapter is possibly the most confronting, the learnings enunciated as 'considerations for practice' being interspersed with revealing e-mailed exchanges between the co-authors in which they explore the previously unspoken side of their collegial relationship, naming and challenging each other's preconceptions and prejudices in ways neither of them had attempted to do at the time of their collaboration. This leads to deeper, more open explorations between them. As their increasingly frank and painful exchange continues, the question of tokenism is raised in the context of their collaborative project, with the white academic pondering her own motivation.

Such questions, while going deeper, build on those raised earlier in the book. Are white therapists guilty of 'dumping' difficult cases on their black colleagues, assuming that it is their unquestioned role to address issues that have a racial component, or of 'surreptitiously decanting' their black cases onto their black colleague, even though she already has a full caseload, mainly white? Actions of this

nature may be readily recognised by watchers of the British TV series, *The Bill*, where black policeman, DI Danny Glaze is regularly burdened by his colleagues with cases where race is assumed to be an issue. The concomitant attitude of the 'dumping' therapists, and its eerie parallel to American colonial history with its suspicion of slaves getting together, emerged after a jocular passing remark from one of the white therapists: was their black colleague perhaps engaged in 'plotting with all those black families you are seeing?' The writer observes: 'The fact that most professional groups are white caucas groups seems to cause little concern' and goes on to say: 'If indeed same-same minority therapy is to develop beyond the simple fact of similar or same ethnicity, a great deal of meeting, talking and theory-building has to take place between black therapists'.

The point is then made:

There also needs to be scope to allow for difference, for not all African-descended people share the same views. Those who share minority-group communities are as different and as varied as majority white people. When black and other ethnic-minority people cease worrying about their collective identity, they can also claim their social class, political, gender, disability, and sexuality difference and also be black (55, 56).

Such points are not new, but they come to life in the chapters of this book through the vivid practice contexts in which they emerge, not as intellectual or even ethical principles, but as hard-learned experience between colleagues who dared to follow beyond the acceptable norms of professional discourse. The book came into being in a British context. However we would be short-sighted to think that it does not apply to us in Australia. Marvellously and appropriately, it is not culture-bound. I commend it unreservedly.

**Helen Pavlin**  
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## Family Health Social Work Practice.

F. K. Yuen, G. J. Skibinski, & J. T. Pardeck (Eds), *The Haworth Social Work Press*, NY, 2003.

Soft Cover. 229 pp. ISBN 0-7890-1648-6. \$US22.95.

## Social Work in the Health Field, 2nd edn.

L. A. Fort Cowles, *Hawthorn Press*, NY, 2003.

Soft Cover. 407 pp. ISBN 0-7890-2119-6. US\$39.95.

The text by Yuen et al. (2003) is divided into three sections. Section 1 describes the 'family health approach', which covers basic ideas such as systems theory and social constructionism and their relevance to thinking about family problems. The main aim is to encourage holistic assessment and care for clients, but while the section does this quite well, it is too basic for experienced therapists.

Section 2 addresses specific presenting concerns such as child maltreatment, domestic violence, mental health, medical settings, alcohol abuse and disability. In true social work style there is also a chapter on social policy and its impact on families.

Section 3 endeavours to tie the ideas together in a final couple of chapters, where the chapter on pain management seems out of place. The highlight of this section is a table summarising problem areas and practice theories and their corresponding interventions. If you accept that Yuen et al. is for those beginning their working career, this is a very effective way to tie practice to theory right from the start. Of course linking theory and practice is one of the essential skills that is demonstrated by a good reflective clinician.

*Family Health Social Work Practice* is great for what it aims to do, but will not suit most people wanting to build a library of books that they will continue to draw on over time. It is well suited to academic and social work course libraries or those who supervise undergraduate students. One cautionary note is that it seems written directly for an American audience with practice examples and policy issues only discussed in that context.

The second book, *Social Work in the Health Field* by Fort Cowles, is a well-researched, detailed overview. The author develops the idea of holistic care by discussing social work at both a theoretical and practical level that pays good attention to working with other professional groups in multidisciplinary teams.

This book also has three sections. Section 1 is an introduction and overview of the field, paying particular attention to historical development, ethics and theory. Section 2 reviews social work in primary health care settings with chapters on hospitals, home care, nursing homes and hospices. Section 3 is a review of the US health care system and discusses emerging themes in social work service. Unfortunately, it has limited relevance in the Australian context.

*Social Work in the Health Field* is good for the purpose it is written for but will not appeal to a family therapy audience because of its broad focus and primary relevance to the social work profession. You cannot do everything in one book, but an area not covered is social work in the paediatric health system, where so many social workers work. This seems an obvious admission when you are promoting a holistic/systemic theoretical base.

As a text on health social work, it makes a worthwhile contribution that will probably appeal to new clinicians and educators.

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