Reviewed by Mark Sweeney

This new book offers student social workers the opportunity to draw on a range of matters relating to social work practice e.g. from experiencing supervision on placement to applying law in practice and considering anti-oppressive issues, social work values and ethics in practice. The book is divided into eight separately-authored chapters with interlinked themes and tasks for the student that promote their learning. Each chapter provides a brief introduction, outlining the chapter aims with easy to read sub sections which provide an accessible read. A brief conclusion in each chapter offers a critical analysis of what has been discussed/ explored followed by an extensive reading list that should direct students/ reader to further reading and research in areas of interest.

The vast majority of the tasks do not require extensive resources and as such could easily be part of a student's 'toolkit' in their development. The contributors to this book all come from varying fields in social care and each have a wealth of knowledge and experience spanning 30 years.

Within the book the exercises encourage students to reflect on their practice, for example Chapter 6 on 'Anti- oppressive practice, social work values and ethics', can lead to students thinking about dilemmas on how their personal and professional values may have conflicted, the ways they managed this and what they feel worked well and what they may have done differently. Supporting students to reflect on their experiences, whether positive or negative, should be encouraged to promote a safe environment for learning and continued development and this book highlights this point.

This book would be very useful for practice educators wishing to support students in their direct practice with vulnerable service users.

It makes reference to relevant models currently being implemented in many local authorities in Scotland e.g. the 'Signs of Safety Approach' in chapter 2 'Capabilities and Standards'. This model would be useful for students in a child care setting as its approach with children and their families is to use clear and understandable language without the use of social work jargon e.g. 'what are you worried about, what's working well, and what needs to happen'. It also encourages students to take a strengths based approach. This model is mainly being used in child care settings and not being adopted in all local authorities, therefore not all students will get the opportunity to apply this model, dependant on their placement and setting.

This book, although a very useful resource across the UK, is not specifically related to practice within a wider UK context. In chapter 5 'Applying Law in Practice', it is useful in discussing how to apply law in social work practice in a broad sense, but when looking at specific statutes it mainly relates to practice from an English perspective.

This book would be easily used within supervision in which practice educators could assist the student in reflection and the personal learning that follows each session. It is my view that this book is well suited to a student on placement. In chapter 3, 'Supervision within placement; achieving best practice', there is a clear explanation as to why supervision is key in social work practice, using related research articles into serious case reviews that further evidence this. Some of the reading in this chapter would help put a student at ease about supervision, its purpose and it being a shared responsibility between the student and practice educator. In addition, I feel this chapter sets out expectations for a student and practice educator from their initial supervision session e.g. completing 'The Learning Agreement' for the placement.

Another positive is that it makes reference to the experience of supervision varying depending on the organisation and experience of the practice educator. The exercises and case examples in this chapter offer students and practice educators the opportunity to reflect upon practice, the use of self and how to get the best from supervision in order to ensure best practice for vulnerable service users.

In summary this book is a useful resource about social work practice for social work students and practice educators. It is presented in a way that offers students the opportunity to think critically about a number of areas relating to social work practice and also allows the practice

educator to assess the student so as to ensure that they can do direct work with vulnerable service user and are better equipped with the necessary skills for that work.

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