

*Self-worth in children and young people
Critical and practical considerations*

Rachel Burr

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Reviewed by Kate Thomas

This book is aimed at all health and social care professionals with an interest in mental health and ways to improve services from a child-led rather than professional led approach. Rachel Burr explores the topics of self-worth with children and young people and the influences from society and education that can impact on mental well-being. On looking at the layout of the book it is mainly block text that can be harder to read over short periods of times and could be less accessible to some readers. Chapters (for example chapter 2) that utilised diagrams helped the overall readability.

The author offers many personal detailed examples of practice and theory of wellbeing alongside critical evaluations of her previous practice using her experiences as a social worker, child therapist, international child rights researcher and anthropologist. This creates a rounded and generous guide to other professionals working to create the best care and support to the developing cultural and societal needs of children. Burr has been able to vocalise the lived experiences of many children, linking to research and theories in a way that provides powerful messages to the readers

This book is split into 8 chapters, which lead cleverly into further development of theories and through the phases of childhood. It is easy to identify chapters more specific to the needs of the reader and where further reading or information can accessed.

I found the early chapters (Chapters 1-4 covering the state of childhood today; mental health and well being; current approaches to mental health support; and a new way of thinking) easier to read and more relatable to my profession in children's nursing. I think for a professional in adult health care, in particularly adult nursing this book would provide an overview of the complex dynamics and obstacles involved in self-esteem and mental well-being within our young people. A theme of these chapters appears to be to encourage professionals to provide children with the skills and resources to take

control of their own mental health, developing resilience and sense of self belief. A powerful picture portrayed in the early chapters highlights the enormous changes to childhood when compared to past generations. In today's world children are losing time to play, as the internet becomes all consuming, exam results and goals are increasing, and finances are tightening; however, Burr identifies that many professional expectations and goals are slower to change. Burr repeatedly focused on changing impressions of wellbeing for children by the changing professional ideas of what can support young people to take the lead themselves. Chapter 5 looks at learning from the children and young people with chapter 6 proposing that young people should be encouraged to speak out about their experiences. This section concludes with a proposal that child centred models for mental health may increase both physiological and psychological benefits.

The final chapter in this book, 'concluding comments, exciting new possibilities and final suggestions' has a powerful statement of how children are enthusiastic to engage in opportunities to make positive change and to access mental health support through every style of intervention, such as one to one or group counselling. This promotes the view that professionals should listen to the needs of children and promote early intervention rather than providing reactive support. The aim should be to use positive and supportive communication to continue proactive wellbeing.

It is easy to notice that this book has been written to improve provisions and the best interests of children and young people. I believe this book would be useful to pre-registered health and social care professionals, practitioners around the whole United Kingdom and other nations with similar health and social care policies and practices, with a keen interest in self-worth. It would also be helpful for teaching staff within the educational setting.

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