

Reviews

Child and Adolescent Mental health Services An operational handbook

Edited by Greg Richardson and Ian Partridge

London, Gaskell (Royal College of Psychiatrists), 214pp

ISBN 978 1901242966, £25.00

In the climate of increasing emphasis on interagency collaborative work, Child and adolescent mental health services are looking at restructuring the way they function. National Service Framework for children makes this a standard requirement for CAMHS across the nation. This book aims at providing a framework for service delivery and working within CAMHS effectively to meet the mental health needs of children. As mentioned in the introduction this is not a clinical text about child mental health problems.

The editors clearly set the scene in the initial introduction the purpose of the book. Putting into practice the theory and strategic framework described in *Together We Stand* (NHS Health advisory Service) for service delivery. Very nicely put are the overarching principles that run through the chapters that follow.

The chapters are authored by experienced practitioners coming from different professional backgrounds that offer an interesting multidisciplinary perspective. There is an attempt to cover a wide range of work from the training and management issues to specific neuropsychiatry services in these chapters. I found the chapter on multidisciplinary working an interesting read as it attempted to provide clarity about the roles of individuals and disciplines within CAMHS. For readers less familiar with CAMHS this chapter provides a brief but sufficient insight into the background and functioning of the professionals involved.

Reading through the chapters, one feels that the authors have successfully given a service development perspective and illustrate the practicalities of setting up and running of various services within CAMHS. Many of the chapters also give an understanding about the actual processes of assessment and the interventions. There is a good reference list, which provides a strong evidence base for the chapters written.

The strength of this book is that it is written by authors coming from a different professional background working in varying clinical settings. The layout of the book is easy on the eyes and the use of quotes decorates the beginning of each chapter adding an element of jest and humour. The glossary of problematic terms at the end is a useful

addition. Tables and diagrams are effectively used in the chapters alongside useful summary boxes.

A limitation that the authors agree at the outset is that this book is coming from the limited perspective of a particular team. It sets out to be 'manual for putting CAMHS in order' and a 'how to' approach where actually it is an account of 'how we did it'. Having said this it does outline the general principles and serves as a valuable resource for someone who would like to know about what goes on in a CAMHS team. This is also a good starting point for those involved in setting up and running a service. I would recommend it to colleagues working in agencies that work closely with their local CAMHS for a better understanding of its functions.

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Identifying Emotional and Psychological Abuse
A guide for childcare professionals

Kieran O'Hagan

Maidenhead, Berkshire Open University Press, 2006, pp 256

ISBN 0 3352 1546 7 (pbk) £19.99

Kieran O'Hagan provides an extremely useful and challenging book, which reiterates and reinforces his views regarding the need for child care practitioners to give much greater attention to the emotional and psychological abuse of children and to the differences between these two phenomena. He begins with reflections on the cases Victoria Climbié and Sally Clark. He argues that the Laming Report revealed that professionals 'remained preoccupied with the question of physical abuse' and showed a 'lack of awareness of an "emotional" or "psychological" dimension in Victoria's life' (p.7), while in the case of Sally Clark, he notes that the judge went so far as to prohibit evidence from 'those professionals who witnessed on a daily basis the quality of emotional and psychological care she was providing for her children.' (p.12).

Chapters 2 to 4 provide a useful overview of relevant ethical and legal frameworks and in depth exploration of definitions of both emotional and psychological development and abuse. Part 2 is divided into 7 further chapters offering detailed discussion of the issues as they affect infants under 12 months, infants aged 12 to 24 months, children aged 2 to 3 years, 3 to 4 years, 4 to 5 years and 5 to 12 years and adolescents, respectively. Each chapter includes separate information about and summary frameworks for observing the emotional and psychological development of children within the particular age range, relevant and illustrative case examples which contrast reassuring and alarming situations,

a summary of main points and Questions/ Exercises which challenge the reader to explore their knowledge of the emotional and psychological development of children within the particular age-range and to reflect on relevant observations they have made of infants, children and young people. ('Give some examples of 5-12 year olds lying and/or deceiving for a benign purpose, and which we are not likely to criticize' (P 159).

In Part 3, O'Hagan offers two concluding chapters and a short epilogue focused on 'Practice Realities and Limitations'. Chapter 12 tells the story of the referral to and interventions by social services in the case of two very young children (20 months and 3 years and 4 months) who suffered emotional and psychological abuse until eventually removed from their parents' care via care proceedings. In particular, O'Hagan argues that their story illustrates the risk that children who are silently suffering abuse which has potentially catastrophic consequences for their social, emotional, psychological and educational development will not be the focus of necessary interventions, because they are often hidden from public view, because third-party referrals (if received) are likely to be vague and seemingly imprecise and because they are unlikely to raise issues, such as physical injury and sexual abuse which usually lead social workers to invoke Section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989. In this case, the decision to investigate followed from knowledge of records of physical abuse of another child by the father and, during the court proceedings, the local authority's solicitor is reported as having grave misgivings about interpreting 'significant harm' as emotional and psychological abuse.

In Chapter 13, O'Hagan reinforces the argument, that there remains 'a serious dichotomy of opinion on emotional and psychological abuse between childcare policy and childcare law' (P 198). He contends that while the law is clear in its recognition of such abuse, policy guidelines, such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DOH, 1999) are not, with the result that front-line workers are 'reluctant to implement the relevant sections of the law' (P 198). He points to and urges changes to ameliorate:

- entrenched and unfounded beliefs about 'having to prove' emotional and psychological abuse
- deficiencies in child development training
- difficulty in accurately reading emotional expressivity in small children
- lack of confidence among managers and workers in relation to paediatricians and lawyers
- continuing failure in multi-disciplinary working, particularly between social services and schools. (p 198)

Perhaps, most tellingly, O'Hagan questions the resistance to acquiring relevant knowledge and confidence on these issues which is commonly found amongst child care professionals, who appear very willing to declare a convenient ignorance of them. All readers, whether practitioners, policy makers or educators may benefit from responding to the invitation to find a partner with whom they can take it in turns to express an emotion through facial expression and to describe the facial expression of their partner.

Such exercises may help to reduce our embarrassment when asked to describe the facial characteristics of young children which we believe indicate that they are feeling fear, joy, alarm or contentment.

Overall, this is an extremely useful text for all those working with or developing policies which impact on children. It provides challenging viewpoints alongside practical tools. It reminds readers, amongst other things, that they need 'to understand that wholly *inappropriate emotional responses, sustained and repetitive*, to a small child's felt and expressed emotion is emotional abuse!' (P 210) and that they have clear legal responsibilities to take action in response to such abuse.

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