Book reviews

Editorial commentary

This edition contains four book reviews, three of which predominantly centre on the theme of working with offenders and victims of sexual abuse. The final review considers approaches to supervision, which may prove useful for practising supervisors to apply in their workplace.

First, Jenny Stevenson reviews Kathleen Faller’s book, which considers tools for research-based intervention when working with maltreated children. In her informative review, Jenny highlights the utility of this book for researchers and clinicians working in the field of child abuse and concludes that it is a good resource for those seeking to ensure that their clinical practice is grounded well in current research findings.

Bobby Print then provides a comprehensive review of Phil Rich’s book, which details current knowledge and issues of juvenile sex offenders. Bobby notes the significant value of this book as an organized review and reference source for professionals working in the field.

Next, Caroline Friendship reviews James McGuire’s edited book, which is concerned with the efficacy of Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment. Caroline provides a well-balanced review and, whilst commenting on several commendable aspects, Caroline highlights its failure to adequately address the gap between What Works principles and how they should be implemented into effective practice.

Finally, Jane Heyes considers Integrative Approaches to Supervision, edited by Michael Carroll and Margaret Tholstrup. Jane brings to our attention the wealth of useful material contained in this volume for supervising practitioners, which offers theoretically-based material and a range of perspectives from practice.

Tony, Cathy and I would like to thank all our reviewers for their excellent work and time taken to complete the reviews, which we hope will help you to identify new reference material to aid your research and practice. Once again we would like to invite anyone who is interested in joining the review panel to contact us via Judy Irving (jsa_admin@iliam.com).

Louise Dixon
Book Review Editor

Maltreatment in early childhood: Tools for research-based intervention. Kathleen Coulborn Faller, New York: Haworth Press. 1999. 258 pp. ISBN 0-7890-0819-X. £19.99.

Kathleen Faller has edited a comprehensive collection of research papers focusing mainly on child sexual abuse, with some reference to children and domestic violence. This collection is the outcome of papers presented at the San Diego Conference Responding to Child Maltreatment in 1997/1998; it is very much grounded in American practice, particularly in the American legal context, but chapter contents have international application.

Each chapter stands alone, but four chapters focus on interviewing techniques with children who may have been sexually abused, three chapters focus on forensic issues including the difficulties of multi-victim cases, difficulties encountered when a child retracts, and allegations of child sexual abuse within the context of divorce, two chapters focus on risks for children in
situations of domestic violence, and the perennial question of women and children leaving violent relationships and inherent risks.

Although this book was printed in 1999, many of the research findings offer insight into current practice or, at minimum, confirmation of practice; it is, however, research oriented rather than practice-based and the clinician has to find the “practice” gems within much methodological and sample detail in some chapters.

It is difficult to highlight individual chapters for specific mention and these are my personal choices—research findings that offered confirmation of my current practice or gave some new insight into professional thinking and practice when working with abused children. Kathleen Faller’s chapter on appropriate questioning is a highly useful one for clinicians examining and revisiting their interviewing techniques and the pitfalls of coercive and leading questions, particularly in a legal context.

There is also a very useful chapter on the challenges and controversies in child sexual abuse interviews, and the improved evaluation of a child’s credibility, using a forensic evaluation protocol.

There is also a very practical chapter about children’s retraction following disclosure of sexual abuse, and how retraction and recantation can be anticipated in a number of cases.

Overall, I found this book to be particularly useful in prompting a re-examination of my current practice but also pointing to gaps in many current service protocols, which could usefully be addressed in a British context. This book is a very useful collection of papers and each chapter ends with detailed references for further reading.

This is the kind of book clinicians will dip in and out of, particularly when considering areas for further research as well as providing up to date research findings. It is not, however, for general reading: its specialist readership are likely to be existing researchers and clinicians working in the field of child abuse, but it would also be a useful resource for those seeking to ensure that their clinical practice is well-grounded on current research findings.

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**Juvenile sexual offenders: Understanding, assessing, and rehabilitating.** Phil Rich. Chichester: Wiley. 2003. ISBN 0471266353.

This book provides a thorough and systematic guide through current knowledge of and issues with adolescents who sexually abuse. Whilst the text is North American, it draws widely on research and experience in the UK and the content is undoubtedly relevant to work this side of the Atlantic.

The text is divided into three parts that are entitled: “Understanding the Juvenile Sexual Offender”; “Assessment of the Juvenile Sexual Offender”; and “Treatment and Rehabilitation of the Juvenile Sexual Offender”. In each of these parts, Rich makes a logical progression through the fundamentals, current issues and research to ideas for good practice.

The first part provides a comprehensive overview of the developments in this field of work. This includes not only details of relevant research and theoretical models but a critique of the complexities and difficulties that abound, for example in terms of definitions and utilizing research findings. Chapter four provides an excellent overview of the emerging importance of developmental, ecological and socio-cultural theories in understanding the development of sexually abusive behaviours. Once again, Rich does not merely present an array of models but provides a very useful discussion and review that helps the reader to form a clear appreciation of the issues involved. His commentary, for example, on the impact of the media
on youth provides some particularly thought-provoking ideas.

Part two of the book focuses on assessment with a concentration on the evaluation of risk. The reader is taken through the strengths and weaknesses of both clinical and actuarial assessments and provided with an overview of the development of structured clinical assessment tools. Importantly, Rich has included a chapter on the assessment of co-morbidity that provides basic information on a range of mental health issues that are increasingly found to co-exist with sexual behaviour problems. These include: conduct disorder; attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; post-traumatic stress disorder; and reactive attachment disorder.

The chapter that covers assessment structure and interview techniques introduces the idea that assessments should be comprehensive. That is, they should aim to provide a broad understanding of the individual, their context and their history. It is surprising that Rich does not give more than a passing mention here to the role and importance of including family at this stage. It would have enhanced this section if ideas for approaching and involving parents and/or carers had been covered.

The final and most extensive part of the book covers treatment and rehabilitation. Rich begins by identifying that the combined skills of a forensic and therapeutic approach are required and goes on to explore a variety of treatment models. The chapter on “Rehabilitation” considers the application of treatment and the subsequent chapters examine the two most commonly used modes, that is psychodynamic and cognitive/behavioural methods. These well-structured chapters combine to give an extremely useful synopsis of the theoretical underpinnings of treatment.

Chapters sixteen to eighteen cover specific treatment components that include: cognitive distortions; behavioural cycles; relapse prevention; and victim clarification. Whilst there is little focus on the “how to” in these chapters, the processes and rationale for treatment are well covered and the reader is provided with some useful samples and case studies.

The final chapters address individual, group and family therapies and provide a summary of a holistic approach. Once again these chapters offer a good basic summary of the fundamentals involved and do so in a clear and concise way.

Overall, I found this book clear and interesting to read. I have no doubt that it will be of significant value to those who are relatively new to the field and will also offer a useful and well organized review and reference for those more experienced in the work.

Bobbie Print
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Offender rehabilitation and treatment: Effective programmes and policies to reduce re-offending. James McGuire (Ed.). Wiley. Series in Forensic Clinical Psychology. 2002. xvii + 394 pp. ISBN 0-471-8996-4.

This book is part of a high quality series that focuses on effective interventions for offenders aimed at reducing criminal behaviour. It is a welcome update of McGuire’s (1995) What Works bible, where an evidence-based approach to crime reduction was first comprehensively reported. Part one of the book details 30 predominately North American meta-analytical studies published between 1985 and 2001, three of which are published for the first time. The main message from these studies is still that, on average, the impact of offender treatment is positive. Broad categories of What Works principles are identified. Some of these are similar to those outlined in McGuire’s (1995) earlier book, e.g., base interventions on a psychological theory of criminal behaviour, assess risk levels and allocate offenders to interventions accordingly, and make use of community-based interventions where possible. In addi-
tion, several new principles emerge, e.g., identify and clarify areas in which staff may exercise personal discretion regarding the application of these principles and ensure managers have competencies for staff.

Part one is a thorough assessment of the academic literature but, as far as “good practice” is concerned, What Works principles do not provide a specific blueprint for either programme design or delivery. Translating these principles into what practice requires not only involves a degree of faith but also the opportunity for trial and error in order to identify what is effective in practice in this country. Whilst the book recognizes that there are still fundamental knowledge gaps in terms of What Works with offenders, correctional policy in the UK has led to programmes being rolled out on a widespread basis. In practice, this is often without the basic ability to assess which principles (or translation of principles) are effective. I feel the book disappoints here, leaving a gulf between theoretical studies and the practice of developing and implementing programmes.

Part two looks at interventions for specific offender types, e.g., low-level aggression, spouse abusers and mentally disordered offenders. The most relevant chapter for this readership is, “Recent Developments in the Assessment and Treatment of Sexual Offenders”. In this engaging chapter, Tony Beech and Ruth Mann take us through contemporary UK research with the emphasis on relevance to practitioners and thoroughly appraises fundamental issues such as therapist selection training and support, treatment style, engaging offenders in treatment, and, finally, treatment effectiveness. I also particularly liked Donald Gordon’s chapter, which provides a framework for practitioners in terms of working with families of “troubled youth”. This type of early intervention provides a promising way forward in terms of reducing re-offending.

Part three of the book covers implementation and policy issues. I had high expectations of this section, which appeared to be aimed more at current issues facing programmes. Tom Ellis and Jane Winstone, in their survey of UK probation programmes, raise some fundamental issues for programmes in this country, primarily that What Works programmes have been based on predominately North American research and the transferability of such programmes to the British context is not known. Despite this, programmes have been implemented on a large-scale basis, making it difficult to ensure quality of implementation. Finally, programme research and evaluation is grossly under-funded, which is ironic, as future funding for programmes is contingent upon demonstrating that they do work.

Overall, the book delivers on its aim to provide up-to-date information on What Works research and interventions in Europe and North America. On a positive note, more emphasis is given to policy and implementation issues than in McGuire’s earlier book. Despite being academically comprehensive, however, this book fails to address adequately the gap between broad What Works principles and how they are implemented into effective practice.

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Reference
McGuire, J. (ed.) (1995). What Works Reducing Reoffending: Guidelines from Research and Practice. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Integrative approaches to supervision.
Michael Carroll & Margaret Tholstrup (Eds.). London: Jessica Kingsley. 2001. 201 pp. ISBN 1-85302-9661.

This slim volume is a collection of papers taken mainly from the annual conference of the British Association for Supervision Research and Practice (BASPR) in 1999, with
contributions from the previous year and additional papers.

The papers are organized into three sections: first, “Models and Frameworks of Integrative Supervision”; secondly, “Supervision in Clinical Areas”; and finally, “Issues in Integrative Supervision”. Therefore, a broad range of issues are discussed, ranging from those that are contextually-based, for example, “Supervision in Primary Care” by Jane Rosoman, to those which focus on the supervisor specifically by considering their mental health, e.g., “Supervision and the Mental Health of the Counsellor”, by Penny Henderson and “Which Sub-personality is Supervising Today?” by John Trowler.

From the Journal’s perspective, the work is not directly linked to issues of sexual aggression. However, for those working in the field, such as probation officers, counselors and psychologists, the book has much to offer in the work place. The strength of the volume is in the close links the writers have to their experiences of supervision, and to the examples and case extracts used for illustration. As a training volume for supervising practitioners, there is a wealth of useful material offering a range of perspectives from practice, with the valuable addition of more theoretically-based material in chapters that focus on a research approach, for example, “Supervision: Researching Therapeutic Practice Martin Milton”. Similarly, as a personal text for professional development, the inclusion of cultural issues, particularly in chapter 13, “Anti-Oppressive Practice in the Supervisory Relationship”, by Harbrinder Dhillon-Stevens, provides an overview of key issues in anti-oppressive practice pertinent to the supervisory relationship. A diverse cultural emphasis is retained in several contributions and positions the volume appropriately within current debates about integrative and cross-cultural approaches in supervision. However, the contribution of the chapter that considers spirituality (“The Spirituality of Supervision” by Michael Carroll) engages the reader with predominately Western ethno-centric responses to spirituality, as if we inhabit a spiritual desert, which is certainly not the case for many committed to some of the world’s major religions.

Generally, supervision is an area that is under-represented both in the literature and in areas of practice organization (Froggett, 2000). It is therefore of significance that a full volume is reproduced focussing on supervision rather than supervision as an element of practice management within larger texts (Coulshed, 1990). The delay in publication following conference presentations is often unavoidable, however the 4 years since the original conference relating to the papers comprising this volume does not appear to be a problem. It perhaps has more relevance than ever to the growing awareness of psychotherapeutic processes within organizational dynamics (Rogers, 2001) and the management of stress in the work place. Similarly, growing popularity of counselling at all levels in clinical and welfare agencies underpins the value of this kind of text to equip those thrust into supervisory roles, with an introduction to the issues and theoretical bases to their interactions.

Jane Heyes

References
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Froggett, L. (2000). Staff supervision and dependency culture: A case study. Journal of Social Work Practice, 14, 27–35.
Rogers, A. M. (2001). Nurture, bureaucracy and rebalancing the mind and heart. Journal of Social Work Practice, 15, 181–191.