

Book Reviews

J. Sloan Manning, M.D., Editor

Clinical Manual of Psychiatric Diagnosis and Treatment: A Biopsychosocial Approach

by Ronald W. Pies, M.D. Washington, D.C.,
American Psychiatric Press, 1994, 577 pages, \$49.95 (paper).

The wisdom of the adage about books and their covers is often lost on this self-confessed bibliophile. Little books, big books, paperbacks, leather-bound behemoths—I am easily seduced. So I was surprised (and embarrassed) to find that I delayed this review for 2 months for none but the shallowest of reasons: I didn't like the feel of it. A wire-bound softcover, its title states it is intended to be a manual (literally, a book for the hand). But at a size of 75 cubic inches and a weight of 1 lb 8 oz, that's some hand. The spiral binding is impractical in a book this large; after a few uses, it invariably becomes bent, rendering the pages difficult to turn. The end result is predictable, and it seems the pages central to the discussion always tear loose first.

Enough ranting about mundane practicality; on to the content. Try as I might to resist this book, I could not. The organization of the material is prosaic and not conducive to quick reference. The information presented is 5 years old (a virtual eternity in postmodern medicine). The DSM nosology is a hybrid between III-R and IV, offering a nice time capsule, but not anticipating the next generation of nomenclature. Despite these weaknesses, Pies' writing is superb. Underneath the casual, conversational tone lies a profound understanding of the disorders discussed that is communicated with aplomb. Seven chapters cover most of the usual topics in good depth; notable exceptions are impulse disorders and eating disorders. Most of the clinical syndromes are treated systematically via a refreshingly clear schema; sections are titled "The Central Concept," "Historical Development of the Disorder," "The Biopsychosocial Perspective," "Pitfalls in the Differential Diagnosis," "Adjunctive Testing," "Treatment Directions and Goals," and "Integrated Case History." In particular, the sections on the bipolar spectrum and unipolar depression flow easily and resonate well with the experience of mood disorders in primary care. The historical information and smattering of clever quotes help keep the reader's interest in lively fashion.

The real strength of the book, however, is in Pies' treatment of the integrated, Engelian model of illness. Unlike most authors, he does more than lip service to the idea that elements of a patient's medical, psychologic, and social milieu may intertwine. He demonstrates these facts by case histories, showing how ignoring any 1 of the 3 spheres may lead to gross errors in diagnosis and treatment, owing to the oft-neglected fact that identical symptoms may spring from vastly different etiologies. His brief descriptions of the various psychological tests available are the most useful for generalist physicians that I have found to date. Finally, his discussion of biomedical disorders having an impact on (or presenting as) psychiatric disturbances is outstanding.

In sum, the layout of this book stifles Pies' penetrating insights and his gift for prose. It is too bulky to reliably serve his target audience (upper-level residents in psychiatry) or generalist physicians as a handy guide. It is too sketchy to serve as a comprehensive reference. Still, it earns a place on my shelf, until Pies fleshes out his ideas in a full-scale text.

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Current Psychotherapies, 5th ed.

edited by Raymond J. Corsini, Ph.D., and Danny Wedding, Ph.D.
Itasca, Ill., F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1996,
462 pages, \$50.00.

Therapists who work primarily with specific populations or adhere to a particular therapeutic orientation may have limited exposure to alternative therapeutic approaches. Other health care professionals, such as primary care physicians, may have little exposure to the principles and procedures used with various therapies. For such individuals who wish to better understand numerous forms of psychotherapy, *Current Psychotherapies* is an invaluable resource.

Chapters in the text describe common therapies, such as cognitive therapy, behavioral therapy, psychoanalytic therapy, and existential therapy. Additional therapeutic approaches are also described, however, with which the reader is less likely to be familiar, such as bioenergetic analysis and psychodrama. While most of the therapeutic approaches relate to individual psychotherapy, there is also a chapter on family therapy. Although psychological therapies often have principles and terminology that make them difficult to comprehend, the information presented here is generally quite understandable.

The text is well organized and consistent in the information it presents for each of the various therapies. Each chapter covers information useful for helping the reader understand the treatment approach, such as its history, the principles on which it is based, and the type of activities performed during the intervention. A case example demonstrating a therapeutic application is given along with a list of additional readings. Some information is also presented about the efficacy of the therapy and problems for which the approach has been utilized.

The uniform presentation of information throughout allows ready comparison among the therapies on specific domains, promoting an understanding of the similarities and differences between them. There is also an outline that directs the reader to the topics covered for each form of psychotherapy. The text provides an overview of the therapies, rather than a description of how to perform them. Thus, it does not attempt to be a "how-to" manual.

An issues chapter presents several important topics with which one must be familiar when conducting therapy. These is-

sues primarily involve ethical issues, legal issues, and issues involved in working with certain populations. Although the coverage of these topics is brief, the chapter will alert the reader to an understanding of their importance.

In addition to providing a survey of numerous psychotherapies, the text gives useful information that can be incorporated in the more general care of patients. Sections on personality in each chapter should facilitate an understanding of personality disorders and help the reader assess why a therapist might use a particular approach, depending on orientation. Numerous commonly used behavioral principles are reviewed, such as the importance of setting unambiguous and highly specific short-term

goals for weight reduction rather than simply telling a patient to reduce calorie intake during the upcoming week.

The therapies presented in this text, perhaps the "alternative therapies" in particular, also serve as a reminder of the great diversity of problems in human experience and the many approaches that have been used to treat them. *Current Psychotherapies* is a concise, informative, and well-written text for anyone interested in a refresher, an update, or learning more about the history, process, or application of numerous forms of psychotherapy.

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