

Treating Preschool Children

edited by Hans Steiner, M.D. San Francisco, Calif., Jossey-Bass, 1997, 232 pages, \$27.95 (paper).

Treating School-Age Children

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Part of the *Library of Current Clinical Technique* edited by Irvin D. Yalom, these 2 volumes focus on the earliest stages of the life cycle. Yalom targets nonpsychiatrist professionals and aims for clear discussions of theory, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of the most commonly encountered conditions. In the foreword to each book, Yalom describes his ammunition as clinical vignettes and pragmatic guidelines. Hans Steiner edits these 2 books, and his colleagues at Stanford hit the bull's-eye for child clinicians, special education teachers, pediatricians, sophisticated day care providers, and even managed care specialists. Historical perspectives and research are cited, ample diagnostic detail is provided, and tables illustrate key material. Case examples transform print into action so one can visualize the presenting problem and how assessment tools and therapeutic techniques are utilized.

Steiner's introduction to *Treating Preschool Children* reminds readers to immerse themselves in their own early past and recommends books from Bowlby to the Brothers Grimm. He describes the early years as a rapid unfolding of life beneath the protective umbrella of family. The authors of Chapter 1 exquisitely describe the interplay of temperament, attachment, separation-individuation, and impulse control and how a derailment in 1 or more of these areas can result in developmental problems and devastating syndromes that make their appearance in the preschool years.

No work is without critics. The first chapter is entitled "General Principles and Treatment," but it is short on treatment. Its long suit is the influence of temperament on patterns of attachment and subsequent development, particularly social relationships. Some might suggest that the chapters be reorganized to begin with feeding, sleep, and elimination disturbances before moving on to disorders of attachment, child abuse, gender issues, and the pervasive developmental disorders. As one might expect in a volume composed of individually authored chapters, there is some unevenness: Rett's disorder and Munchausen by proxy receive scant attention (less than a page together) compared with 3 pages devoted to sleep physiology.

This book about treating the youngest set is a bargain with its richness of case vignettes, abundant descriptive symptoms, and a wealth of practical techniques suggested to address the developmental and psychopathologic conditions that can confront the parents of preschoolers. Families are taken into account, and children are never treated in isolation. Four of the 8 chapters include strategies parents can use to advocate for services from local school districts and managed care organizations. This work succeeds in getting clinicians in touch with preschoolers' problems and how to approach them.

Treating School-Age Children begins with Steiner's introduction, setting the stage for a developmental period full of so-

cialization, concrete thought, a lust for learning, expanding horizons of exploration and adventure, and an emerging sense of self. He reminds the reader that school-age children begin to conceal their innermost thoughts and desires; they develop a private world akin to *The Secret Garden*. Or, as only Steiner can put it, "What used to be an open stream of communication becomes a hidden brook bubbling under moss and branches." Children live on that edge between fantasy and reality; they allow access to their inner lives through drawings and play. This is the period of the life cycle where family interventions and group approaches are therapeutic avenues in addition to play therapy techniques.

This volume has an identical format and price to the one regarding preschoolers. Again, 8 chapters are utilized to convey a host of diagnostic pictures via clinical vignettes, and similar notes follow each chapter, repeating the key concepts prior to citing corresponding references. A healthy balance is struck among psychodynamic, family, and biological factors as treatment is discussed, particularly in the chapter entitled "Depression." The chapter on anxiety disorders and trauma is noteworthy because it specifically addresses cultural issues. The section on disruptive behavior disorders brings theory into practice by utilizing 2 case examples on more than 1 occasion to illustrate what transpires during later stages of treatment. Seven of these chapters include specific advice for families when interfacing with managed care; and throughout the work, school and community resources are recognized as important partners in treating school-age children.

Munchausen by proxy receives 2 pages of print in this volume, and child abuse is a recurrent subject, although with a different twist because only 1 of its authors is the same as that dealing with preschoolers. This book is devoid of mention of psychosis or schizophrenia, and the author who writes about depression states, "Bipolar disorder is seldom diagnosed in school-age children." Bipolar disorder certainly unfolds in prepubertal children, and this could have been an opportunity to educate nonpsychiatrist mental health professionals about the signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder, as well as appropriate intervention. While many of the authors in this edited volume appropriately refer to what will be covered in other chapters or volumes, the author of Chapter 5 devotes 6 pages to pain disorder in apparent disregard for the following chapter titled "Pain and Related Problems"; careful editing could have deleted such redundancy.

The introductory chapter of this book is a perfect summary for a review of both volumes. These 2 companion works about preschoolers and school-age children discuss social, cognitive, and academic development; how those developments affect self-esteem and social interactions; and the clinical problems that may arise in the earliest phases of life. Both books are a bargain at any price, but even more so given their ease of reading, consistently organized style, and the convenience of paperback. Steiner and colleagues are to be congratulated for raising the umbrella on the secret world of children and their unique clinical dilemmas.

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