

Book Review

Alan R. Rosenberg, Editor

MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY, second edition. By Ira Glick, M.D. and David Kessler, M.D. Grune and Stratton, New York. NY. Pp. 380. 1980. \$23.50

The authors offer this as an introductory textbook; it succeeds admirably and should enjoy an enthusiastic reception. Clarity of presentation, conciseness, and wide scope are the chief virtues of this splendid introduction to a complex field.

Particular strengths of the book are its organization, the conceptual structures and framework for clinical data which it offers the student, its catholicity of approach, and its excellent set of references. The authors suggest that the book be used in conjunction with an ongoing course or supervision, a recommendation with which I heartily concur.

The book explicates and balances approaches to the evaluation and treatment of dysfunctional families. The approaches are derived from a variety of clinical orientations, which the authors smoothly integrate. One will find here: systems thinking, structuralist ideas, psychoanalytic derivatives, derivatives from the "growth" model, strategic approaches, and derivatives of the communication-network theory of families. Although the book acknowledges a variety of movements in the family therapy field, it avoids going into a hard sell for any particular school.

The focus is on the evaluation and treatment process. There is a useful delineation of techniques for the beginner, with the recognition that he will require time and experience to integrate them into his therapeutic repertoire. The authors have thought out in advance a number of situations which the beginner is bound to encounter, and for this they will receive his thanks.

The book will be particularly useful to forensic psychiatrists in a variety of areas. Divorce and child-custody litigation are, of course, areas in which family dynamics require substantial attention. The book will also be useful in the treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners, as well as in the supervision of probation or parole. Understanding family dynamics is crucial to the understanding of violence-prone or child-abusing families. A knowledge of the field will also be useful in dealing with the families of delinquent children, or with families where guardianship may become an issue for medical or psychiatric reasons.

There is a particularly helpful transcript at the close of the book,

which presents segments of a 16-month family treatment with followup. This transcript, combined with the interspersed clinical vignettes, helps bring the field to life for the beginner. My only criticism is that the beginner is hungry for this type of material, and more of it would have been welcome.

Overall, I find this the best survey of the field that I have read.

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