

two forensic psychologists: Drs. William G. Austen and James R. Flens. Dense, highly technical language is used to derive the primary point: this test can add to hypothesis testing in the forensic context, especially if the data are compared with and interpreted in the context of the interview and with other data available in a forensic context.

The ASEBA gathers self-report and collateral data by using a range of instruments to assess behavioral, emotional, and adaptive functioning across the lifespan, yielding competence profiles, and assessing the patient for empirically based diagnoses, such as those in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, by means of computerized calculations that also produce a narrative report. As with other tests, when properly used, the ASEBA can yield valid data in forensic settings. However, when such an instrument is improperly used (e.g., scored by a computer), it may generate quantitative data that are presented in the context of a narrative (familiar, easy to follow, and intelligible) report that can create a sense of coherence and “truthiness”¹ that is not always justified.

According to the back matter, this is a clearly written book that is accessible to both the novice and experienced clinician. I could not disagree more. This multiauthored text is written in dense technical language. The knowledge assumed in psychology and forensic psychology is considerable. Absent formal training in psychology, the material covered extends beyond the scope of knowledge and expertise of most forensic psychiatrists. Some chapters are more accessible than others. The chapters review in detail the validity research for tests and subtests, to help prepare psychologists for testimony as to the validity of measures used with respect to the question posed by the court. For forensic psychiatrists interested in going deeper into this field the answer to the question posed in the first paragraph is a qualified yes.

Reference

1. Truthiness: the feeling of “truth” as opposed to the “facts.” Colbert Report, October 17, 2015. Available at <http://thecolbertreport.cc.com/videos/63ite2/the-word>. Merriam Webster Word of the Year, 2006. Available at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/06words.htm>. Accessed November 29, 2013

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Testifying in Court: Guidelines and Maxims for the Expert Witness

By Stanley L. Brodsky. Second edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2013. 238 pp. \$29.95.

This latest book from forensic psychologist Stanley Brodsky, like its first edition in 1991, is a gem. Entertaining, empowering, and erudite, *Testifying in Court: Guidelines and Maxims for the Expert Witness* is directed at forensic psychologists, although it applies to all expert witnesses, from the novice to the experienced, who face the “dreadful and wonderful experiences on the witness stand” (p 4). The 55 chapters, ranging in length from three to seven pages, are arranged alphabetically in an acrostic structure, each ending with a maxim that is witty, obvious, or counterintuitive. The content has been gleaned from the author’s expert witness workshops, research, and laboratory contributions.

Although much has been copied or only minimally updated from the first edition, there are significant revisions and additions, as well as omissions, in this second edition. For example, the chapter on Child Sexual Abuse Testimony includes updated material, and the previous discussion of anatomic dolls has been removed. New maxims cover Knowing When to Fold Them (withdrawing from a case), Malingering and Faking Bad, Moving On, Narcissistic Experts, Negative Assertions, Perspective Taking, Pull to Affiliate and Allegiance Effects, Qualifications and Expertise, Report Matters, Socialization During Trial, Staying Current, Theatrical and Outlandish Attorneys, Worst Testifying Experience, and Your Expertise Used Against You.

Gone are chapters on Elder Abuse and Neglect, Employment Discrimination, Fishing Expeditions, Limits of Expertise, Orientation to the Courtroom, Primary Source Gambit, Scientific Challenges, Star Witness, Termination of Parental Rights, and While Lawyers Fuss.

A sample of the more witty maxims: “After a disaster during testimony, correct the error as soon as you can. If you cannot, let it go” (p 61). “A few people are just not cut out for testifying in court. They should move on” (p 130). “Neither socialize nor discuss any aspect of the case with opposing counsel, with other witnesses, and especially not with

jurors” (p 189). The obvious: “Challenges to professional experience should be met with knowledge of the literature and affirmations of the worth of your findings” (p 23). “When you truly do not know, say so. Don’t waffle” (p 186). The counterintuitive: “Always have in reserve slow and quiet replies and proper manners, and if the opportunity arises, clinical reflections” (p 103). “When the time is right to disagree with cross-examination questions, do so with strength, clarity and conviction” (p 136). “When the cross-examination question is true but asked in a pushy and negative manner, consider agreeing strongly” (p 169).

There is an up-to-date composite reference list that even includes the latest edition in the Ziskin and Faust series¹ and a useful index. Readers are invited to share their testifying experiences directly with the author by e-mail, perhaps with a third edition in mind.

Reference

1. Faust D: Coping with Psychiatric and Psychological Testimony, 6th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012

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Parental Alienation: The Handbook For Mental Health and Legal Professionals

Edited by Demosthenes Lorandos, William Bernet, and S. Richard Sauber, Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Ltd., 2013. 550 pp. \$89.95.

Child custody disputes have no ethnic, educational, or socioeconomic boundaries. When Albert Einstein’s marriage was ending, he feared that his wife was intentionally “poisoning” their two children against him (Ref. 1, p 210). Cases of such behavior were first reported in the legal literature in the 19th century and in the mental health literature in the mid-20th century. Despite the devastating effect that custodial discord can have on a child’s development, there are few laws against this practice.

A parent who undermines the relationship of a child with the other parent without reasonable cause is disregarding the youth’s need for, or possibly right

to, this meaningful association. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child² states that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” (p 39) in all child welfare matters. In 2010, Brazil legislatively outlawed parental alienation (PA), which it defined as an action that is designed to disrupt a youth’s “psychological education [that is] promoted or induced by either parent” (p 478).

One problem with studying PA is that it lacks a universal definition. Brazilian Law focuses on the need for children to form healthy attachments with their parents. In the United States, however, PA generally is described as a mental condition, which is how Richard Gardner introduced the term in the 1980s. This ambiguity makes it challenging for professionals to compare research studies, to identify effective interventions, and to hold malefactors accountable for their behaviors.

The editors of *Parental Alienation: The Handbook For Mental Health and Legal Professionals* addressed this problem by defining PA as a mental condition that affects a child or adolescent “who allies himself or herself strongly with one parent (the alienating parent) and rejects a relationship with the other parent (the target parent) without legitimate justification” (p 39). The editors invited 11 mental health and legal professionals to contribute to this compendium of scientific, legal, historical, and international data about PA. The text is divided into two sections: Strategies for Mental Health and Legal Professionals and Foundations for Parental Alienation: Historic, Scientific and Legal. The 16 chapters can be read in any order. Most begin with a case that serves as a springboard for examining relevant clinical, social, and legal matters. The editors summarize key points in most chapters as a helpful review of the material.

PA is classified as mild, moderate, and severe, based on the capacity of the alienating parent to develop insight and to modify his behavior, as well as the level of impairment of the affected child. The authors examine the literature and outline forensic and clinical mental health interventions for each level of alienation. In some cases, the alienated child may display significant symptoms and impairment that may meet criteria for a mental disorder. Counseling affected children and parents may result in restoring healthful relationships, but in more challenging cases, a modification of the custodial arrangement may be indicated. Severe cases of PA may involve an