

ZSOLT DEMETROVICS

THE SCIENCE OF PRACTICE

BEINART, H., P. KENNEDY & S. LLEWELYN, eds. (2009) *Clinical Psychology in Practice* (Oxford: BPS Blackwell) 408 pp., 24.4 cm, ISBN 978-1-4051-6767-3, €37.90.

To review a clinical psychology textbook is not always a grateful and exciting job. Basic works of the topic are – necessarily – built on similar schemes; it has to introduce the symptomatology of major mental and behavioral disorders, their epidemiologic characteristics, the possible mechanisms in their backgrounds and the therapeutic implications. A few personal approaches might be represented in these books, and of course an individual tone counts for much, and sometimes fairly creative results can be achieved in this aspect; however, the content does not usually leave much freedom for the authors. The title of the present volume though, with the addition of ‘in Practice’ to the title ‘Clinical Psychology’ is more promising than usual and after reading it, it turns out that this book is in fact not only more but different than what we are used to in this topic.

The editors of the book are the Clinical Director (Helen Beinart), the Academic Director (Paul Kennedy), and the Director of the Oxford Doctoral Course in Clinical Psychology. All editors are professionals who have been taking an active part for a long time in the top-quality education of clinical psychology, research and development of this field of science.

The book is in all aspects a fully practical handbook/textbook whose aim is unambiguously to help training, to present the kind of knowledge and skills well-trained, competent clinical psychologists have to obtain. The practical nature of this textbook’s aim is illustrated in advance with the quote by Goethe: ‘Knowing is not enough; we must apply’ – and in fact this approach is characteristic of the entire work.

The book is exquisitely edited. The first four introductory chapters are mostly written by the editors. This part deals with basic approaches, ethical issues, description of the educational model (United Kingdom), issues related to professional competence, thus the basics of practical aspects of clinical psychology. The concluding chapter of this section (Myra Cooper and Cynthia Graham) is concerned with the relationship between clinical work and research, emphasising the inseparable and interdependent nature of these two. The authors are eager to define research in a wide sense and point out benefits beyond specific research results like enhancement of collaboration, building a more extensive relationship with other disciplines, etc. The section entitled ‘Demystifying the Research Process’ is a very important one. A great number of clinicians are in fact afraid of – or at least are reluctant to do – research, while on the other hand researchers often consider practicing clinicians unprepared for research. The essence of clinical research is, however, that researchers

and practicing clinicians can effectively cooperate by understanding and helping each other's work. This cooperation is decisive in all phases of research, from defining the question to interpreting results. Even at the point of assigning the subject of the study it is undoubtedly true that the realistic nature of a researcher's theoretical assumption that stems from theories can be judged better by the practicing clinician and conversely, a therapist's idea has to be tested by the researcher; to what extent it fits former results and theories and whether it can be operationalised at all. Presentation of the research process can facilitate this kind of cooperation for clinicians or can even serve as a starting point for their own research.

The second section of the volume, the actual body of the text, elaborates the areas of clinical practice in 23 independent chapters edited into four great units. The first such unit is on the clinical psychology of children and adolescents concerning areas like children and young people growing up in care, self-harm, pediatric services or possibilities of cognitive behaviour therapy in this population. The second unit is characterised by the perspective of health psychology; topics include oncological application of clinical psychology, treatment possibilities of chronic pain, and neuropsychological rehabilitation of patients with brain damage. The third unit partly covers the classic fields of clinical psychology; here, authors discuss the issue of psychotic and personality disorders, but special fields of intervention, new and innovative methods are also mentioned. Family therapeutic possibilities in the treatment of psychosis and the role of early intervention are also discussed. Two separate units deal with special problems of the elderly and there are chapters on the fields of bibliotherapy and self-help. It is an exciting, wide-ranging part of the volume; maybe the issue of treating cultural differences would be worth a separate chapter, since most of the countries nowadays face the problem of treating client populations with a heterogeneous cultural background. The final unit of this second part deals with four special areas (postnatal post-traumatic stress disorder, transition to adulthood, eating disorders, sexual health) and their clinical psychological references.

The closing, third section deals with the issues of the professional clinical psychological services. Therefore the practical questions of service are discussed here; topics like supervision, organisation, leadership, and teamwork issues or community approaches and user involvement. This is an inspiring and important section, though former chapters are not restricted to the therapeutic room either, regarding their approaches. In this section the broader context and system in which the therapeutic work is going on is explained in detail.

The volume is an outstanding source for the training of clinical psychologists, however, many of its chapters might be perfectly suitable for undergraduate studies as well. The reader is given an excellent overview of the practical aspect of clinical psychology. Each chapter is theoretically well embedded and carefully introduces the empirical, evidence-based practices and interventions. The volume is a masterly solution for integrating approaches of clinical, practical work and science, thus showing the way towards a more successful treatment. The textbook in fact reveals to us the science of practice.