

and what made them worse. Patient memoirs, including Sheldon's, are no different. What sets her account apart, however, is that her medical background makes her more aware of the process of mental illness as she passes through it.

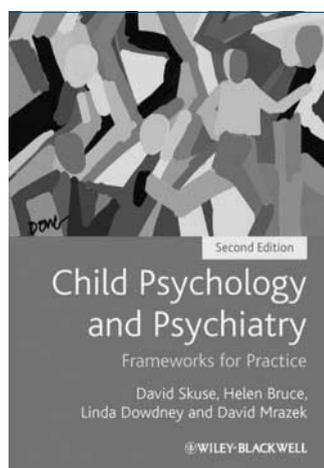
Although Sheldon has never practised, her medical degree informs her understanding of her mental health now and during the many trials she has faced along the way. In a lucid, confessional style she produces a record of her experiences while considering the psychopathology, diagnosis and treatment of her anorexia and schizoaffective disorder. Her intention is to give the reader insight into mental illness as medics would themselves experience and analyse it.

For the clinician, most interesting are Sheldon's criticisms of her care. She is critical of her treatment by ex-colleagues, of misapplied diagnoses and treatment regimes, such as at the specialist eating disorder centre she attended, which seemed to her cruel in the level of discipline it demanded. Her criticism is not intended to shame those that have treated her. Instead her intention is that through accurate recollection of events as they occurred she will be able to inform her reader, whether patient or clinician. Many will feel that as unique and moving as Sheldon's struggle has been, these are sadly stories that they hear every day. Certainly, Sheldon provides a history of depression, anorexia and psychotic illness that would be familiar to most people working in mental health. If anything, her account suffers from her effort to make it as concise and clear as she can. It often seems as if she holds back from describing important aspects of her life, such as her family situation, to push on in her story.

Sheldon's account does not have the weight of accounts like William Styron's *Darkness Visible*, on his experience of depression, nor is it the only book available by a mental health professional on their experiences of mental illness (*Undercurrents* by Martha Manning, a clinical psychologist, is a good example). However, it does describe a unique and brave battle by a patient with a complicated list of psychiatric problems much closer to home. Despite Sheldon's lack of experience, her background provides a route to refresh the empathy of a tired clinician by allowing them a glimpse of what it might have been like for them to go through what their patients have experienced.

**Samuel Ponnuthurai** Foundation Trainee Year 1, Barts and The London NHS Trust, correspondence c/o British Journal of Psychiatry, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, UK. Email: samuel.ponnuthurai@gmail.com

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.111.099523



**Child Psychology and Psychiatry: Frameworks for Practice (2nd edn)**

Edited by David Skuse, Helen Bruce, Linda Dowdney & David Mrazek. Wiley-Blackwell. 2011. £39.99 (pb). 304 pp. ISBN: 9780470973820

The editors of this book seem to have set an arduous task for the contributors: provide an account of the chosen topic in a condensed form limited to an average of five pages (including

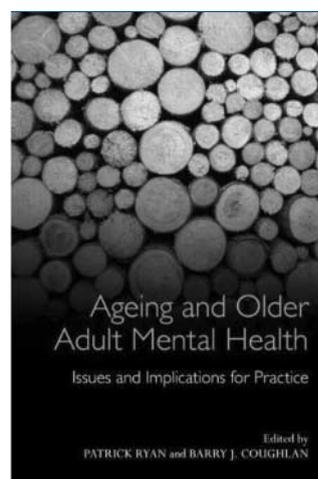
tables!), include recent developments in the field and limit the references to a minimum (at best 25 references). The result is a collection of chapters with themes ranging from family and systemic influences through literacy disorders to paediatric psychopharmacology. This is a remarkable feat given that this is a slim volume (290 pages of text including references). Most of the contributors are well-known names in child and adolescent psychology and psychiatry, mainly, but not exclusively, from the UK and Ireland.

The book is divided into seven sections: developing competencies; promoting well-being; attachment and separation; the impact of trauma and maltreatment; atypical development; assessment; and approaches to intervention. It is targeted at both child and adolescent psychiatrists and clinical child psychologists and their respective trainees. The editors have succeeded in making the topics relevant to both groups and, in fact, the mix of chapters is one of the strengths of the book. The quality and usefulness of the chapters, however, vary widely from those that are outstanding to others that are prosaic and ordinary. The chapters on anxiety disorders in children and adolescents, childhood behaviour problems, eating disorders and family therapy assessment are rather basic. The chapter on psychodynamic approaches does not do justice to the subject. It would have been more useful if some chapters had addressed specific aspects of the topic rather than the whole subject.

However, Muter & Snowling provide a first-rate account of literacy disorders that includes both dyslexia and reading comprehension disorder. Conti-Ramsden & Durkin's chapter on specific language impairment is an elegant summary of the topic. Early-onset bipolar disorder by James is an admirable account of the current state of knowledge on the subject, and Taylor's chapter on diagnostic classification describes the issues facing child and adolescent psychiatry masterfully and is opportune at a moment when DSM and ICD are going through revisions. For these chapters alone, the book is worth buying. A strength of the book is that the 46 short chapters provide something for everyone practising child psychology and psychiatry.

**Muthusamy S. Thambirajah** Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Dudley and Walsall CAMHS, Evergreen Place, 18 Lichfield Street, Walsall WS1 1TJ, UK. Email: muthusamy.thambirajah@dwmh.nhs.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.111.103374



**Ageing and Older Adult Mental Health: Issues and Implications for Practice**

Edited by Patrick Ryan & Barry J. Coughlan. Routledge. 2011. £21.99 (pb). 296pp. ISBN: 9780415582902

This is a most unusual and curious book. It took me quite a while to work out its frame of reference, relax and start to appreciate what it has to offer. Ultimately, I concluded that it challenges the lenses we commonly use to consider mental health in older people, making it quite a thought-provoking read.

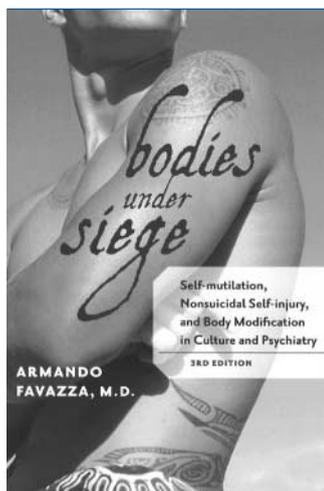
The editors, both senior lecturers in clinical psychology at the University of Limerick in Ireland, aim to present the reader with discussions of mental health issues in old age within the context of normal as well as problematic development across the lifespan. They are upfront about their intention to provide a collection of chapters that pay attention to understanding the positive and salutogenic aspects of ageing. These aims are achieved in part as we read about the potential of theories, such as Erikson's lifespan developmental theory, attachment theory and the dual process model of assimilative and accommodative coping, to shed light on thinking about matters such as adjusting to bereavement or to life in care. In this respect, the book succeeds in drawing these ways of thinking to the fore.

In other respects, when I was not finding the book fascinating, I found it frustrating. There are many spelling errors, a paucity of tables or figures (four in the entire volume) and considerable repetition between chapters, with population demographics and the basics of Erikson's theories being the main victims. It promises to appeal to students, educators, practitioners and policy-makers, yet its coverage of fundamental research evidence is often sketchy and sometimes superficial – the chapter on treatment of mental health issues, for example, tries to cover treatment of major conditions within sections of just 1–3 paragraphs each; that on carers fails to acknowledge the role of spouses; whereas that on assessment mistakenly cites the Mini-Mental State Examination as an assessment of mood. Students should not rely on this book for basic education in this field, nor should professionals rely on it for an update on the latest research or practice.

This book lacks polish but it is a bit of a rough diamond. I feel it needs to be read as a collection of interesting essays rather than as a conventional text.

**Jan R. Oyebo** Director, Clinical Psychology Doctorate, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B13 8DL, UK. Email: j.r.oyebode@bham.ac.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.111.095166



**Bodies under Siege:  
Self-mutilation,  
Nonsuicidal Self-injury,  
and Body Modification  
in Culture and Society  
(3rd edn)**

By Armando Favazza.  
Johns Hopkins University Press.  
2011. \$35 (pb). 352 pp.  
ISBN: 9780801899669

Self-harming behaviour is a global public health problem. It is one of the main risk factors for suicide and it results in extensive mortality and morbidity. Every year in the UK, self-harm results in more than 200 000 attendances to casualty departments, placing considerable strain on the National Health Service.

Favazza's original *Bodies Under Siege*, published in 1987, rapidly became the seminal textbook on self-harm. It contained an unparalleled cultural exploration of an array of self-harming behaviours. By dedicating separate chapters to specific variants

of self-harm (the head, limbs and genitals each warrant their own chapter), and examining different beliefs, practices and customs across the world, Favazza brought into a very public discourse a previously unmentionable topic.

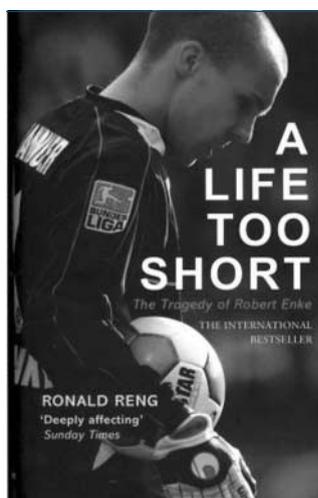
The third edition, although 40 pages shorter, retains most of the aforementioned trove of information, while also summarising the subsequent decades of academic and clinical endeavour into the prevention and treatment of self-harm. Notable additions include an in-depth discussion of the social forces behind the exponential increase in tattoos and body modification observed in modern popular culture, as well as the pivotal role the internet now plays in providing information about self-harm, including treatment for people who self-harm and their families. Thousands of websites, chat rooms and forums dedicated to self-harm have been created since the second edition was published in 1996.

The latest edition includes Favazza's personal reflections on his career-long exploration of self-harm and body modification, in which he reaffirms that there is hope for those whose lives have been overtaken by such potentially destructive behaviours. The book ends with a fascinating epilogue by Fakir Musafar, a pioneer of the 'modern primitive' body modification movement, who discusses the attractions, dangers and possibilities represented by such behaviours.

My only criticism of the book is that Favazza confusingly uses a number of interchangeable terms for self-harm, the preferred UK term. Indeed, the proliferation of terms describing the same phenomenon has arguably held back research in this field. Overall, however, the book is very well written and extremely informative, and Favazza has produced a refreshingly honest and objective account of self-harming behaviour. It is, as stated by Favazza, more than a catalogue of horrors; 25 years on, it is still an important publication in this challenging area of psychiatry and a particular strength of the third edition is its comprehensive (26-page) reference list, which spans more than 130 years of literature about self-harm. There is much to be learned from this book and, for clinicians or academics working with people who self-harm, it is an invaluable resource. Highly recommended.

**Rohan Borschmann** Postdoctoral Research Worker, Health Services and Population Research Department, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, De Crespigny Park, London SE5 8AF, UK. Email: rohan.borschmann@kcl.ac.uk

doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.111.103440



**A Life Too Short: The  
Tragedy of Robert Enke**

By Ronald Reng.  
Yellow Jersey. 2011.  
£16.99 (hb). 400 pp.  
ISBN: 9780224091657

In late 2009, Robert Enke was at the peak of his footballing powers, acknowledged as one of the German *Bundesliga*'s best goalkeepers and expected to represent his country in the 2010