

and contribute to their community' (p. 10). Mental capital is likened to financial stock that can be nurtured and accumulated throughout life, but which also alters through life in a trajectory-like fashion. Mental well-being facilitates optimal and judicious use of the capital so that it is not depleted. The papers in the volume detail the best available evidence of how best to nurture and accumulate mental capital at the level of the individual and community, and how to best put these to judicious use, mindful of subsisting challenges and likely future ones (i.e. drivers of change; e.g. an ageing population, technology innovations in the workplace, immigration, changes in the physical environment, the global burden of depression). Five broad areas are subsumed under mental capital and well-being: mental capital and well-being throughout life, learning through life, mental health and ill health, well-being and work, and intellectual disabilities. The book is organised in sections around the five themes, plus a section for cross-cutting reviews and a conclusion section.

I enjoyed the rigour of the papers, which along with use of strengths–deficits and cost–benefit analysis models, and an integrative and multidisciplinary approach to policy recommendations, help the book deliver on its stated aims. The plea made by the editors for a global effort towards building evidence on the cost-effectiveness of mental capital and well-being interventions charts the way for future work. I would have preferred a more integrated consideration of spirituality as a mental resource. The adoption of a utilitarian and materialist framework is bound also to cause some disquiet. Littlewood raises these and other related issues in his chapter titled 'Comparative cultural perspectives on wellbeing'. Overall, this is a masterful effort at foretelling using facts and scientific evidence.

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CONTENTS

From the Editor: Best interests *Joe Bouch*

Editorial: Letter from America - how will health reform affect psychiatric care?
Steven S. Sharfstein

Pharmacological treatment of depression and bipolar disorder in children and adolescents *Bernadka Dubicka, Paul Wilkinson, Raphael G. Kelvin and Ian M. Goodyer*

The Human Rights Act 1998: implications for the medical treatment of children and young people *Martin Curtice and Tim Hawkins*

Drug misuse in older people: old problems and new challenges
Vellingiri Raja Badrakalimuthu Daphne Rumball and Ajay Wagle

Interface between the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act: the deprivation of liberty safeguards *Nick Brindle and Tim Branton*

Unappealing legislation? Commentary on: Interface between the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act *Donald Lyons*

Mental capacity assessment and 'best interests' decision-making in clinical practice: a case illustration *Asit B. Biswas and Avinash Hiremath*

Advance statements in adult mental health
Jelena Jankovic, Felicity Richards and Stefan Priebe

Advance statements: the view from Scotland. Commentary on: Advance statements in adult mental health *Jacqueline M. Atkinson*

Life coaching for mental health recovery: the emerging practice of recovery coaching
Rani Bora, Saija Leaning, Alison Moores and Glenn Roberts

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