

present a clarity (varying a bit from chapter to chapter) that is vivid. Because post-modernism has swept quickly from France across the USA, we would be better armed with some knowledge, rather than ignorance, when it washes up on our shores. This book would be a good place for psychiatrists to start.

American Psychiatric Association (1994) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th edn)* (DSM-IV). Washington, DC: APA.

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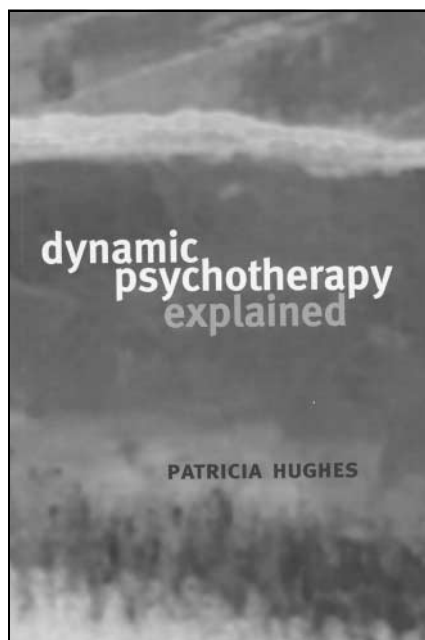
Dynamic Psychotherapy Explained

By Patricia Hughes. Oxford: Radcliffe Medical Press. 1999. 162 pp. £16.95 (pb). ISBN 1 85775 336 4

This small and user-friendly book does exactly what it says on the cover. The author acknowledges that she herself felt the need for a straightforward introductory text when learning about psychotherapy. Anyone setting out to explore the jungle of theory and jargon that is the basis of psychoanalytic theory and practice will welcome this book. Dr Hughes has written the book that she needed, and as a consequence will doubtless meet the needs of many others.

At the heart of the book are two large chapters. One on the theory and one on the practice of psychodynamic psychotherapy. These could be a sufficient introduction in themselves, but they are set firmly in context by chapters underlining the essential links between psychodynamic, biological and social models of the mind. Psychodynamic thinking is thus placed centrally among other ways of understanding mental disorder. This clearly demonstrates the relevance of psychodynamic understanding to any psychiatrist, and indeed to all professionals who work with disturbances of thought, feeling or behaviour.

The book is clearly written and accessible, and includes additional help in the form of summary points clearly set out in boxes within the text. To say that this is an easy read would not be a criticism. It takes considerable knowledge



and understanding, as well as the ability to communicate, to distil such a complex and off-putting subject into a brief, but informative book. I wish that this book had been available when I was a trainee, and I have already found it useful in my teaching. A valuable addition to the library of anyone who may have a use for the theory and practice of psychodynamic psychotherapy in their working life.

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Common Mental Disorders in Primary Care

Edited by Michele Tansella & Graham Thornicroft. London: Routledge. 1999. 244 pp. £55.00 (hb). ISBN 0 415 20572 7

This book was published to mark the retirement of Professor Sir David Goldberg. It brings together distinguished clinicians and researchers from a range of professions involved in primary care, with the aim of helping those working in a variety of primary care and mental health settings. The value and good timing of this publication can be seen in the enhanced position of primary mental health care in Government policy in England. According to the

National Service Framework for Mental Health (Department of Health, 1999), primary care and access to specialist services is one of seven standards that health authorities and primary care groups will be responsible for implementing.

Here the reader will find valuable background reading from a broad range of contributors on models of care, training, clinical practice guidelines, epidemiology, computerised assessments and the social and health problems that are common in practice. Important groups such as the elderly and those in developing countries also receive attention. Many chapters represent work in progress by the contributor. Exceptionally, and all the more valuable therefore, are forewords by Rachel Jenkins, on the role of policy development, and by Scott Henderson, reminding readers of the obstacles that have yet to be overcome, for example, in the development of clinically validated assessment tools.

The reader should be encouraged to go further. Since the completion of this volume the long-awaited results of randomised trials have shown how difficult it is to train primary care physicians to become more effective in the management of depression. Indeed, recent US trials indicate the need for specialist practitioner teams using assertive methods, including telephone follow-up of patients who may otherwise default. The importance of providing specific psychological treatments such as cognitive-behavioural therapy in primary care is not a prominent feature of this volume, which is surprising at a time when primary care physicians are beginning to realise the need for more alternatives to psychotropic agents and counselling.

These caveats apart, it would be difficult to find a better start for those determined to venture onwards in search of the latest findings in the field in the leading medical and psychiatric journals. There is no doubt that this volume marks a substantial and lasting body of achievement, without which so much progress could not have followed.

Department of Health (1999) *National Service Framework for Mental Health. Modern Standards and Service Models*. London: Department of Health.

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