



reviews

Recovery: A Guide for Mental Health Practitioners

Peter Watkins, Elsevier, 2007,
\$49.95 pb, 180 pp
ISBN 9780750688802

Handbook of Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Robert King, Chris Lloyd & Tom Meehan, Blackwell, 2007,
£27.99 pb, 232 pp.
ISBN 9781405133081

Mysteriously absent from the National Service Framework for adult mental health, and all but forgotten from modernising policy initiatives (Holloway, 2005), psychiatric rehabilitation is now enjoying something of a renaissance.

These books are serendipitously well paired, each complementing and completing what is missing in the other, and there is much here to support practitioners interested in developing recovery-based rehabilitation. Both are very well produced. They are pleasant to hold and read, and both take the reader on a well-planned tour of the territory. Their major differences are in voice, focus and engagement.

Watkins' monograph underlines the significance of context, both familial and societal, and is slanted towards humanism, creativity and existential considerations. Unusually in a 'guide for mental health practitioners', he offers much that is prefaced by 'I believe' or 'speaking personally', and it is interesting to be drawn into a relationship with an experienced and thoughtful practitioner who has sought to work out his principles in practice. He also includes reflections on the personal and professional challenges associated with the suicide of his son. He offers a book with passion and commitment so lacking in more 'balanced texts', and it is all the better for it.

However, his use of stories of personal recovery, as 'the soul' of his book was marred by his accompanying disclaimer on one of his chosen witnesses, who clearly valued a biological, diagnostic and medical approach. Watkins' preference of Laing over Leff, and gentle but sustained anti-psychiatry posture, felt oddly paternalistic.

It is a skewed account, but one that leans towards what may be the emerging centre of future practice (Care Services Improvement Partnership *et al*, 2007) and is mostly consistent with the imperative in psychiatric nursing to put 'values into action' (Department of Health, 2006).

Coming next the *Handbook of Psychosocial Rehabilitation* felt a little disappointing. It helpfully clarifies the

various terms and frames of reference used in the text, and is thoroughly evidence based, but in being so well ordered and systematic it felt disconnected from the reality of working in rehabilitation, which depends on engaging hopefully with the chaotic but enervating disturbance that is day-to-day practice. However, it is a handbook rather than a manifesto, and its virtue is clarity rather than commitment.

Its style worked best when helpfully outlining service evaluation, and was weakest when discussing the well-being of the practitioner, when it offered a competent review of the literature on occupational stress but came over as unempathic and detached in tone. To a degree, Helen Glover's excellent chapter on 'lived experience perspectives' compensated for this, but her account did not seem to be integrated in the discourse of the book as a whole. Overall this is a book that will support research and help pass exams, but may not fire passion for the work itself.

Taken together these are worthy additions to a growing series of foundational texts offering a contemporary restatement of psychiatric rehabilitation. Those interested in building up a rounded understanding should buy both and take time to read and reflect on them. Those only wishing to buy one book on the topic may like to see what else is available.

CARE SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP, ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS & SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE (2007) *A Common Purpose: Recovery in Future Mental Health Services*. SCIE. http://www.spn.org.uk/fileadmin/SPN_uploads/Documents/Papers/SPN_Papers/recovery2.pdf

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (2006) *From Values to Action: CNO Review of Mental Health Nursing*. Department of Health.

HOLLOWAY, F. (2005) *The Forgotten Need for Rehabilitation in Contemporary Mental Health Services*. Royal College of Psychiatrists. http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/frankholloway_oct05.pdf

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Handbook of Career Development in Academic Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

L. W. Roberts & D. M. Hilty (eds) 2006, American Psychiatric Publishing, \$39.00 pb, 360 pp. ISBN 1585622087

Academic medicine in the UK has received several serious setbacks in the past two

decades. Departments of psychiatry in the new medical schools have had difficulties in recruiting academic psychiatrists: posts remain unfilled or are filled by non-psychiatrists. Among the reasons for this are the research assessment exercise (RAE), lack of interest, poorly defined career structures, and pressures (financial and otherwise) on the National Health Service. This book, edited by academic psychiatrists and under the aegis of the Association for Academic Psychiatry, aims to provide a map for US trainees to encourage them to join academic psychiatry. In this, it also points to ways in which UK trainees can be encouraged to do so.

The book has 29 chapters, divided into six sections. The first section – 'Getting started' – covers academic careers, strategies for academically oriented residents (trainees), psychologists and others. 'Smart strategies' and questions to discuss with a mentor or a colleague are given, including activities and priorities. The second section – 'Getting there' – includes a well-written chapter on preparing a curriculum vitae, attending interviews for an academic position and evaluating a contractual offer. The chapter on interviews includes sensitive issues and how to deal with questions which may be 'illegal'. The third section covers managing time, reading and preparing budgets, aligning one's goals with those of colleagues, the department and the institution, understanding and preparing for academic promotion, negotiating with the department chair and developing ethics skills. There is plenty of sensible and practical advice.

The fourth part covers feedback, teaching, writing test questions and letters of recommendation. Some of these issues are rarely discussed in training and are often shrouded in mist. For example, with a move in the UK towards open letters of recommendation and structured references, it is helpful to learn to write such letters. The fifth section deals with developing academic skills: literature research, evaluating clinical research, publishing, reviewing manuscripts, grant applications and quality improvement. The last section provides an overview on how to continue professional development, and gives information on certification, mentoring, networking, taking care of oneself and creating a positive early career environment.

Aimed at academics, the book is applicable to all trainees. It will be of interest to those planning to train in psychiatry and those already in the system.

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