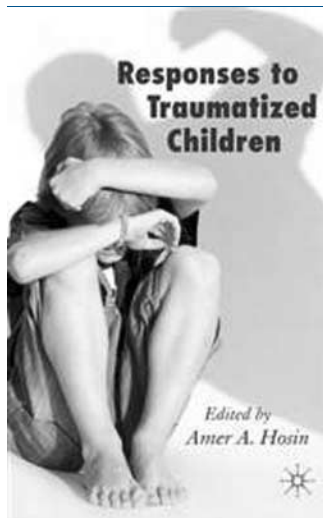


Book reviews

Edited by Sidney Crown, Femi Oyeboode
and Rosalind Ramsay



Responses to Traumatized Children

Edited by Amer A. Hosin.
Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
321pp. £55.00 (hb).
ISBN 1403996806

There is no shortage of traumatic experience in the world. High rates of prevalence are well documented, especially in areas affected by war and natural disaster, as are the effects of trauma on mental health. Children are especially vulnerable. In the past half century or so there has been a U-turn in our understanding of how children are affected by trauma and how best to help. It used to be believed that children are not deeply affected by trauma and, if not reminded, they will soon forget and recover. We now know that this is not the case and children, especially young children, can be affected in a lasting way by trauma unless they receive timely, appropriate and effective help.¹

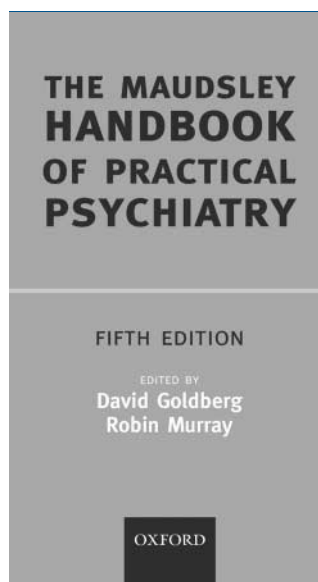
But what is effective help, and what do we know about the approaches that are most effective for children? This book seeks to address these questions and others. For example, what are the priorities for intervening in situations such as natural disaster? What type of support can prevent the development of mental health problems? Can resilience be enhanced? How can mental health professionals make a useful contribution to the mental health of refugees and children affected by war? The evidence base for guiding mental health interventions remains scanty in many key areas.

This ambitious book sets out to provide clinicians working in the challenging and diverse field of child trauma with an accessible summary of the available evidence and a guide to current good practice across a broad range of topics, for example, diagnostic assessment, building resilience, dealing with natural disaster such as hurricane Katrina and work with refugees. The contributors are experienced clinicians from the UK and the USA. Each chapter provides a clinical perspective and also a helpful review of literature with extensive references. The chapter on psychopharmacology, however, is disappointing, lacking adequate coverage of the neurobiological or developmental perspectives. In addition to the topics already mentioned, this book gives space for some important contextual issues, for example, the need to consider how best to protect clinicians from the effects of secondary trauma and burnout; working across different cultural perspectives and the importance of working with parents and families of children affected by trauma.

- 1 Morgan L, Scourfield J, Williams D, Jasper A, Lewis G. The Aberfan disaster: 33-year follow-up of survivors. *Br J Psychiatry* 2003; **182**: 532–6.

Guinevere Tufnell Great Ormond St Hospital, London WC1N 3JH, UK. Email: guinevere.tufnell@nhs.net

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The Maudsley Handbook of Practical Psychiatry (5th edn)

Edited by David Goldberg
& Robin Murray. Oxford University
Press, 2006. 256pp. £24.95 (pb).
ISBN 0199299765

Practical skills in any subject are best learnt by apprenticeship, wherein the less experienced student learns from a more experienced teacher. This is especially important in psychiatry where the practical skills of assessment, formulation and management require a teacher to have wide experience to be able to teach their students the nuances of assessing psychiatric patients where no two patients present the same way. The challenge for the editors was to provide a simple and structured guide to practical skills in the assessment and management of patients in psychiatry, while also covering the wide variations in, and associated challenges of, psychiatric presentations.

The eleven chapters cover four main themes: interviews and assessment, mental state examination, formulation/summary and management. Practical guidance is included for interviewing children, adults and elderly and neuropsychiatric assessment. Also covered are different interview situations including wards, out-patients and emergency departments. The areas that new trainees find difficult during assessment (i.e. personality, sexual abuse, family relationships) are covered in adequate detail.

The chapters on mental state examination and formulation/summary are brief, yet cover the necessary subject matter. Management covers early treatment interventions and when to refer to experts. The treatment plans provided for different disorders are to the point and in-line with current guidelines. The wide variety of conditions for which information on when to refer is provided should prove a useful resource for trainees.

Deserving a special mention is the chapter on special interview situations. The wealth of experience of the editors is most evident here, where guidance on many a difficult situation that trainees face daily has been provided in one place. The section on special problems covers a range of disorders/situations requiring different approaches. The final chapter provides information on legal and service organisation issues. The appendices contain information that will be useful on a daily basis to a trainee in psychiatry.