

patients. Its success also infiltrated the wider social context of the media and general public.

I believe that one of the rewarding aspects of this book is that aside from its core content it covers aspects of the ongoing struggles of the National Health service in today's political climate and the importance of solidarity.

Having spent some time in a therapeutic community in Massachusetts, USA as a medical student on my elective, I was drawn by the parallels of my own experiences. I became quite involved in the various dilemmas and debates that the book threw into question.

This book is a light and easy read. Although it may not be seen as a core text in terms of psychiatric training programmes, I would recommend it as an interesting and controversial read, for both mental health professionals and a wider audience.

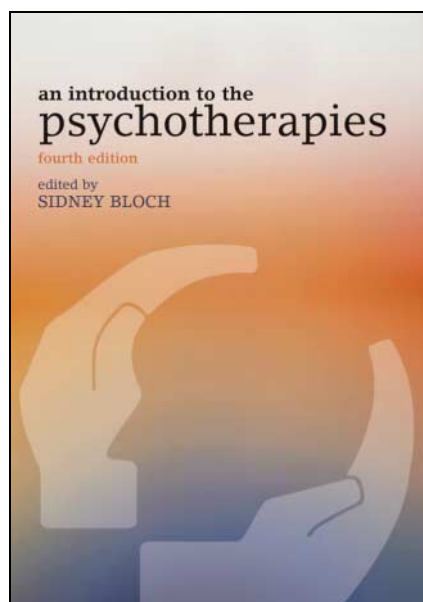
**Marianna Leontis** Enfield Town Team CMHT,  
59–60 Silver Street, Enfield EN1 3EP, UK.  
Email: marianna.leontis@hotmail.com  
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### **An Introduction to the Psychotherapies (4th edn)**

Edited by Sidney Bloch. Oxford University Press. 2006. 464pp. £24.95 (pb). ISBN 0198520921

Although this book is nearly 30 years old, I had never seen it before. First impressions are favourable. A multi-author guide to

the range of current psychotherapies through 18 chapters, including ones on psychotherapy with young people and the elderly, it nearly always succeeds in delivering on the essentials. These are: the key principles of an approach; when it is likely to be used; and the extent to which there is evidence for its effectiveness. A sense of consideration for the reader's likely needs informs the book so thoroughly that it is surprisingly readable, with several chapters likely to become recommended introductions for a given approach. The book's value is augmented by summary lists of key readings, where most contributors are commendably objective in their selections.



A brief historical introduction allows some reference to be made to areas, such as person-centred psychotherapy, which are thereafter effectively ignored. While no book of this kind is likely to be completely comprehensive, three omissions were noticeable given the likely needs of trainee psychiatrists. First, although several important models of brief psychotherapy are considered in some depth (based on the work of Malan & Davanloo; Ryle & Hobson), the one that is now the most widely used, Klerman's interpersonal psychotherapy, is not. Second, supportive psychotherapy (the darling of many MRCPsych examination essays) retains a chapter, but in it, as elsewhere, the newcomer to the field is given no guidance on what the term counselling means, or on how it might differ from psychotherapy. Third, one apparent consequence of the prioritisation of general principles here is a failure to illustrate psychotherapy when practised other than in out-patient settings. (The chapters on behavioural therapy and psychotherapy for older people are exceptions here, but one on 'family therapy in the adult psychiatric setting' is misleadingly titled. Moreover, there is no acknowledgment at all of the role of specialist hospitals or therapeutic communities.) These caveats aside, I recommend trainee psychiatrists have access to a copy of this reliable compendium throughout the early years of training.

**Chris Mace** St Michael's Hospital, Warwick  
CV34 5QW, UK. Email: c.mace@warwick.ac.uk  
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