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eBooks also available for review

Margaret, J. (2013). *Working as allies: Supporters of indigenous justice reflect*. Awea Publications: New Zealand.

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Elizabeth MacKinlay 2012. *Palliative Care, Aging and Spirituality*. London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley. E-book, 144 pages.

This book is self-claimed to be 'a guide for the dying'. It addresses the final tasks for older people who know they are dying. It explains that addressing the spiritual needs for older people who are on their 'final life journey' is different from younger people who are dying, although the information may be useful for younger people also. It also suggested it would be a useful book for those working with people who are dying, and indeed I felt this was the best use for it.

The book is divided into chapters on grief and loss; fear of dying; final life career; accepting that death will come; pain, distress and suffering; prayer; responding to meaning; transcendence; healing of relationships; intimacy and dying; dementia and dying; ethical and moral issues; final days and hours; and learning to live without a partner.

The whole tone of the book was one of respect for the needs of the person dying, which fits well into a social work perspective. It was emphasised that this is not an appropriate time to try to convert someone. The 'tasks' of the dying person were discussed and the suggestion that the dying need a midwife to guide them was made. It talked of the need to reclaim the dying process from the medical profession in order to reinstate spirituality. The book also addressed practical issues such as pain management, families who disagree, and the physical changes in the body at the end.

It was obvious that the book was written by a Christian although it was explicit in reminding us of the wider spiritual dimension. However most of the examples were also of Christians and I felt this limited the book. It is easier to discuss spiritual needs with someone who has a religious framework but much harder to do when this is absent, and so more examples from non-religious people would have been helpful.

I thought this was a well written and thoughtful book that would be useful for people working in the field of palliative care, especially those new to the field. Experienced practitioners would likely be aware of many of the issues and needs discussed. I would think it would be especially useful for non-professionals who have become involved with someone dying.

Caz Thomson,
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Gray, M., & Webb, S.A. (Eds.). (2013). *Social work theories and methods* (2nd ed.), London: Sage, 304 pages. Paperback.

Social work theories and methods is a collection of edited chapters from leading international authors. It overviews significant theorists, theories and perspectives that contribute to social work theory and methods. The book is divided into three parts: Theorists; Theories; and Perspectives for practice. It begins by considering what is social work and social work knowledge. The skill of interpretation is emphasised, even interpreting the chapters in this book, which it is noted are themselves interpretations. Self-analysis is therefore promoted as is the review of previously known 'certainties'. This, it is argued, gives rise to new possibilities and understandings, which in turn encourages us to review how we approach situations. In short, this book encourages the reader to think critically.

Readers are encouraged to use the book in a selective fashion, i.e. to pick and choose from the various chapters, or to read sequentially. I think it is preferable not to begin by reading chapter one as it is so academic I found it off-putting and I think it will not be very accessible to some readers. Fortunately, the following chapter is easier to follow, although my perception was that in general the first section was 'harder going' than the remaining two sections. Having said that, the 'Relevance for social work' sections in each of the chapters on theorists clarified the relevance of including a particular theorist, offering an explanation of a particular theorist's ideas to the social work profession, and practice at the micro and macro level.

Both the second part 'Theories' and final part 'Perspectives for practice' were easier to read, and I think therefore more accessible. Each theory and perspective is overviewed and includes a helpful section on 'Relevance for social work' as well as a piece considering 'Implications for social work practice'. The study questions at the end of these chapters will also be a useful prompt to further reader's understanding and application of each theory or perspective.

These chapters are information dense, and provide an excellent introduction, critique and application of a range of theories and perspectives. As noted in the book itself, while

some people will question the inclusion of certain theorists, theories or perspectives, and the exclusion of others, this book provides an excellent collection of core theories and methods used in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas. This text is likely to be consulted time and again by readers (whether students or experienced practitioners) given the depth and breadth of material provided.

As the editors state, this book's value is in demonstrating two things: '(1) the value of theory in terms of its explanatory power and the way that it deepens our understanding of social work; and (2) the value of social work as it progressively contributes to constructing a better world for people to live in' (p.45).

The book is available from Footprint Books or other good booksellers.

Leisa Moorhouse,
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Margaret Nelson Agee, Tracey McIntosh, Philip Culbertson and Cabrini 'Ofa Makasiale (eds). *Pacific identities and well-being: Cross cultural perspectives*. Otago University Press, Otago. Paperback. 330 pages.

The book is a welcome addition to those working in cross culture settings. It offers a range of topics that students and practitioners should critically think about and consider when practising in the field of mental health. The book is divided into four parts, Identity, Therapeutic practice, Death and dying and Reflexive practice. Poetry is also used throughout the book, which vividly describes the theme used in each part of the book.

Part 1 on 'Identity' covers four chapters on experiences of identity crisis and identity development from a New Zealand-born perspective. This part provides a good introduction for social work students and practitioners in terms of understanding the complexities of identity construction amongst Pacific peoples. The discussions are thought provoking and allow one to understand some of the daily realities of New Zealand-born Pacific peoples. Chapters explore the complexities of identity and observations and questions one might have when being part of two cultures.

Part 2 on 'Therapeutic practice' covers five chapters on frameworks and values that can be used in the counselling process when working with mental illness amongst Pacific peoples. Chapters provide various approaches of counselling from traditional methods to contemporary approaches to mental health. These chapters complement other practical guidelines that are already available, such as the 'Exploring the 'cultural' in cultural competencies in Pacific mental health', by Samu & Suaalii-Sauni (2009) and Le Va mental health publications which, used alongside this book, will enhance learning for students and practitioners.

Part 3 on 'Death and Dying' consists of four chapters that discuss ways of dealing with grief and some of the ethical issues faced in death and dying. These chapters discuss perspectives of the spiritual world and how these are interpreted by Pacific peoples. The chapters illustrate how death and dying in the Pacific worldview is perceived as part of life's journey

and an extension of indigeneity. This section is definitely a good addition to the literature as it provides an insight into the world of death and dying for Pacific peoples, which all too often gets misinterpreted when working in the field of mental health.

Part 4 on 'Reflexive practice' provides an overview of the thinking processes when experiencing mental illness; the stigma associated with mental illness and healing processes that can occur when one is connected or is secure in their cultural identity. The healing processes place emphasis on being culturally and spiritually aware. This final section links back to cultural identity and provides an overview of recognising Pacific peoples' perception of wellbeing. Learnings from these chapters should be considered and incorporated into practice.

The book is relevant for social workers, managers and supervisors working in Pacific mental health; migrants and other ethnic communities; or when working cross-culturally. We recommend it for undergraduate students to get an overview of Pacific perspectives on identity and wellbeing in relation to mental health and for managers and supervisors as a reference book.

Litea Meo-Sewabu & Tanya Koro,
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Tait, Audrey & Wosu, Helen (2013). *Direct work with vulnerable children. Playful activities and strategies for communication*. London. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 224 pages.

Audrey Tait and Helen Wosu's passion for engaging effectively with neglected and abused children in order to bring about their healing undergirds every page of this valuable resource for social workers and other professionals working with vulnerable children. It doesn't take too much reading to be caught up in the authors' zeal to help those children whose trust in adults has been marred through ill-treatment by those adults who were supposed to be caring and nurturing.

Right at the onset the practitioner is challenged by the authors: 'This healing process can begin with the child learning to engage and trust just one other person in her life. You could be that person' (Tait & Wosu: 10). They then set out to provide the practitioner with a compendium of guidelines for practice and playful activities for working with neglected and abused children. Nuggets of wisdom are interspersed throughout the book. Sometimes someone needs to point out the obvious to you; something you have somehow forgotten or simply never thought of. This is what Tait and Wosu do.

In Chapter Two they lay the groundwork as they focus on the preparation necessary for working with vulnerable children. In their discussion of confidentiality they make a useful distinction between 'fun secrets' (e.g. necessary for a pleasant surprise) and a 'have to tell secret' (that entails someone getting hurt or not being safe). In this chapter they also discuss some of the difficulties regarding language, culture and listening to the child. The practitioner is reminded that children are the experts of their life story. It is up to the practitioner to listen to the child, not just to the spoken word, but also to the messages that are conveyed through play, drawings or behaviour.

The authors explain the value of free play in Chapter Three. They aptly say, children will communicate to you what is happening in their lives if they feel safe and trust you and you provide them the right opportunities. They will communicate, not necessarily tell you; they will play out their experiences. In Chapter Four Tait and Wosu give some basic principles that come into play when you work with vulnerable children. They share some thoughts in Chapter Five on the characteristics of the children the practitioner will be working with. The reader is reminded that some areas of their development may be age appropriate, whereas they may be developmentally significantly younger in areas of language, social and emotional development, which causes much distress in their everyday lives. In Chapter Six the authors share their thoughts on how to manage a relationship with a child that retains a child-centred, sensitive and productive character. This is followed in Chapter Seven by a discussion of common misconceptions about working creatively with children.

In Chapter Eight the pace of the book picks up as practical tools are presented to communicate with children about the sensitive issues they may be reticent to talk about. By using everyday objects that require minimal financial outlay, Tait and Wosu describe playful activities that will facilitate talking. A choice of 17 activities is given that may be of help to break through the communication barrier between the practitioner and the child. The step-by-step approach the authors follow simplifies the utilisation of the activities, and they illustrate some of the activities with insightful examples from real-life practice.

Chapter Nine provides the practitioner with a choice of 15 activities that foster the development of the child's emotional literacy.

Chapter Ten is a valuable chapter for the practitioner who needs to help children come to terms with what is happening in their lives. Its relevance is enhanced by an activity that addresses the potentially sensitive issue of DNA testing in a simple, yet enlightening manner.

Chapter Eleven is a must-read for any practitioner who is involved in the decision-making surrounding respite care. When managed well, the authors rightly state, respite care can broaden a child's environment and increase his confidence as safe people are introduced into his life. Tait and Wosu's practice experience in care and protection social work become evident in the valuable pointers they give how respite could be managed. The activities in this section can minimise the potential distress that respite may cause a child.

In the last chapter the authors share some thoughts on the management of night-time difficulties.

Chapter Twelve is followed by 10 Appendices with reproducible templates for some of the main activities that the authors found useful. It is followed by a limited Glossary.

Direct work with vulnerable children is bound to become one of those resources that social workers treasure, simply because of the wealth of information that it contains that is not readily available elsewhere. Practitioners in the care and protection field and those involved in child and adolescent mental health services particularly will no doubt find it very useful.

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Golding, K.S., Fain, J., Frost, A., Templeton, S., & Durrant, E. 2013, *Observing children with attachment difficulties in preschool settings: A tool for identifying and supporting emotional and social difficulties*. London & Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers. A4 Paperback. 155 pages.

It is good to be reminded of the power of observation. Social workers working with children can gain much just from open-eyed and unobtrusive watching. Child observation has been an essential component in training for psychotherapy and also for early childhood education, and the better our understanding of attachment issues the more helpful our interventions can be. So how useful could a publication with this title be for social workers?

This book offers a good account of attachment theory and current knowledge about the related neuroscience. There are chapters on child development and the emotional needs of children. An assumption of the writers is that many of these children would be living away from parents and have had disrupted patterns of care although we know attachment difficulties as often arise in intact families.

The writers introduce a checklist for making assessments of 3 to 5 year olds of attachment-related behaviours. The assessment tool is intended for use by preschool workers and is to be completed over time and at the preschool setting only. The tool does not come with any scoring criteria or norms; it is designed to be completed after some time of observation and to build a profile of the child. The intention is that this will help a secure attachment base to be provided in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) setting for children who may have not experienced this elsewhere.

Social workers and other child mental health workers will probably not want to use the assessment tool themselves but could find it useful for cueing the ECE workers as to what patterns of behaviour to observe. Meanwhile, the social worker will be looking beyond the child in his or her education setting to get a good developmental history, family narrative and attachment history which add to the understanding of the child and account for the way the child presents and behaves in the ECE setting and elsewhere. Also helpful for the social work assessment is a preschool visit and unobtrusive and carefully minuted observation without using such a checklist. Reflecting on this expands what we hear from preschool workers, and contributes to our formulation and plan of intervention which is made of course in cooperation with parents and others who are concerned for the child.

In summary – this publication is not of direct use for social workers who already have observational skills and access to the literature of attachment, but it may be useful in the library for reference to Group Special Education and early childhood staff.

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