
Address all enquiries to:

Helen Simmons
Book Review Editor
Social Work & Social Policy programme
School of Health & Social Services
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North 4442
New Zealand

E-mail: H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz

Hale, B., Barrett, P., & Gauld, R. (2010). *The age of supported independence: Voices of in-home care.* London: Springer. i-xxi; 131 pages. 99,95 €. ISBN 978-90-481-8813-0.

The methods and insights of anthropology have long contributed to the practice and theory of social work and social gerontology. One immediately thinks of Barbara Myerhoff's wonderful study, *Number our days: Culture and community among elderly Jews in an American ghetto*¹, and its significant contributions to narrative approaches in New Zealand and abroad to supporting the elderly. Anthropologists have also effectively modelled reflexive practice techniques² which have been subsequently and enthusiastically embraced by gerontologists and social workers, alike.

In *The age of supported independence*, Dunedin social worker (and herb gardener) Beatrice Hale is joined by Patrick Barrett, lecturer and researcher in health and policy issues and by health policy specialist Associate Professor Robin Gauld. Dr Gauld was Dr Hale's PhD supervisor while the latter was at the University of Otago's Department of Preventive and Social Medicine; much of the information in this slim book is taken from her dissertation³.

Dr Hale and her colleagues frame a new understanding of a key transition in the life course of today's older people – 'supported independence' – by way of anthropology's rites of passage framework. Her lucidly-presented and excellently-researched thesis posits this transition as a new phenomenon in the life course, bridging the so-called Third and Fourth Ages, or the young (and independent) old and the oldest (and frequently institutionalised) old. Entry into supported independence is not strictly an age-related phenomenon, however, but rather is determined by the extent of personal frailty and the consequent necessity for formal home care.

Dr Hale uses Van Gennep's⁴ three stages in the rites of passage framework to help practitioners and policy makers better understand and respond to the experiences of frail elderly

1 Myerhoff, B. (1979). *Number our days*. New York: Meridian.

2 See, e.g., Ruby, J. (1982). *A crack in the mirror: Reflexive perspectives in anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

3 Goodwin, E. (2010, June 7). Authors speaking for seniors. *Otago Daily Times*.

4 Van Gennep, A. (1909/1960). *The rites of passage* (M. B. Vizedom & G. L. Caffee, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

newly receiving formal care services into their homes as they adapt in place to disability and functional decline. Key notions include i) the removal of the individual from his former status (separation), ii) a resultant suspension from normal social contact (liminality), and iii) a readmission, reconnection or reintegration into a society (reconnection). In the context of supported independence, the hallmarks are i) a clinical assessment that 'triggers' home care (separation), ii) resulting in spatial, bodily, temporal and relational arrangements that are utterly transformed and personal emotions that are wrenched in unexpected directions (liminality), and iii) reconnection through sensitive and effective health and social care, accompanied by adequate transport and housing policies and practices, the whole of which offers choice, recognises strengths, and respects individual autonomy and decision-making (reconnection). The framework provides the opportunity to construct a rich understanding of a series of moments little studied in the professional literature, which tends to focus on retirement and the entering of residential care as the key late life markers for the young-old and the oldest-old, respectively.

Much of the book is devoted to the discourses of 'home' and 'independence'. The authors unpack ageing-in-place as they explore the invisible home that is no longer quite 'home' as personal meanings are undermined by the rendering of the private, public (in terms of both the body and physical space). Considerable attention is also given to the separation experience of deficits assessments, which too often leave informants feeling confused, anxious and misunderstood or 'not-listened-to'. Some of the most interesting material discusses the different 'timescapes' of the various participants: 'To study the experience of time is to study how people's lives are constructed and framed through their temporal environments' (p 45).

The introduction of formal in-home care frequently leads to feelings of alienation from the sites of service delivery, the body and the home. It also interrupts the rhythms of everyday life, as the older person must acquiesce to the time pressures and requirements placed upon low-paid, low-status and poorly-trained formal caregivers by their funders and managers, and by the demands of their own families. The authors identify a number of policy and practice prescriptions to help frail elder service users successfully negotiate the liminal period that follows assessment and to reconnect socially.

Particular attention is devoted to the need to develop and expand the role of formal caregivers, by providing them with more time and training to promote client autonomy and independence. The move is one from 'doing for' to 'doing with' – from a 'domestic assistant' or 'personal carer' to a 'home health aide'. A career development path and higher pay are, moreover, necessary to attract more workers into a field already experiencing critical workforce shortages.

The authors answer the question 'Can the role of care workers be extended to that of active catalysts for positive ageing, and in reconnecting older people?' in the affirmative:

Personal care and 'body work' that is carried out in a way that draws attention to the older person's lack of ability to perform very basic self care can be contrasted with caregiving that involves working alongside the older person in a way that supports their continuing abilities (p 39).

This has important implications for the content and delivery of in-home care. Moreover, formal caregivers should be aware of their status with many older persons as 'fictive kin'

and are thus uniquely positioned to guide older persons through ambiguity and invisibility to new meaning and social reconnection. They must be prepared for this role.

Overall, Hale and colleagues provide a very readable, scholarly and thought-provoking discussion of the key issues around ageing in place as this is experienced by the frail elderly who require in-home care. Using understandings borrowed from anthropology, the authors have contributed a new and fresh perspective to an underreported aspect of a significant period of transition increasingly experienced by many frail elderly – the transition to supported independence. Their work provides a useful foundation for understanding the struggles and travails of those frail elderly who are on the journey and those who travel with them. Along with this comes much guidance and insight for the overall direction of older persons' health and social care policy and practice.

Highly recommended!

Doug Matthews MSW MANZASW

Registered Social Worker, Older Persons Health Specialist Service, Canterbury District Health Board.

Social workers in New Zealand today are employed to work with young people in many settings, including education, health, justice, welfare and youth services. Social workers and youth workers also participate in a broad range of work with young people in multi-agency contexts 'where the disciplinary boundaries between professions are increasingly characterised as porous' (Wood & Hine 2009, p. 1) Viewed from the perspective of a social worker in a youth agency which also employs youth workers, the three books reviewed below collectively offer some insights on the common ground that exists between youth work and social work with young people.

Wood, J., & Hine, J. (eds.) (2009). *Work with young people*. London: Sage Publications. 290 pages. Paperback.

In *Work with young people*, Wood and Hine (2009) provide a broad, up-to-date commentary on some of the latest research and debates exploring current thinking about the purpose, principles and practice in this field, as well as examining developments in theory and policy.

Jean Hine suggests that viewing young people from a particular discipline or perspective tends to produce a distorted picture which ignores the realities of young people's lives. She makes a case for 'breaking out of agency silos' in order to view young people's lives more holistically. Consulting with young people and exploring their understandings of their experiences provides greater opportunity to identify and acknowledge strengths.

Alan France draws attention to the changing and contestible definitions of 'youth' and to the limiting impact on young people of the dominant ideas of the times. He invites practitioners to reflect on the extent to which young people's 'choices' are shaped by wider structural forces and social processes. In his chapter on social capital, Thilo Boeck stresses the importance of making young people aware of the structures that constrain them. Citing Arches and Fleming (2006) he suggests:

It turns the spotlight round from people as a problem in themselves, to the problems they encounter, and enables them to see opportunities to develop a much wider range of options for action and change (p. 101).

The latter part of the book focuses predominantly on youth work and youth policy in the UK and Europe. Local parallels may be drawn but some of this section is perhaps of less relevance to New Zealand audiences. Discussion of the impact of globalisation is certainly applicable to young people in New Zealand but readers here will have to look elsewhere for analysis relating to minority youth or indigenous cultures.

Despite the range of settings and contexts within which youth work is done, *Work with young people* (2009) reminds us that it is the 'how of practice, if not the what' that can have the greatest impact on young people.

Sapin, K. (2009). *Essential skills for youth work practice*. London: Sage Publications. 226 pages. Paperback.

The *how* of practice is addressed in Kate Sapin's book *Essential skills for youth work practice* (2009). Sapin clearly lays out the principles and values that underpin youth work: respect for young people, voluntary participation, accountability, confidentiality, and ethical and anti-oppressive practice. Much of the book describes the required skills in light of these principles, with a particular emphasis on engaging young people where they are at, building rapport and maintaining respectful, empowering relationships. Critical in these relationships is the requirement that young people exercise choice and control over their participation, and develop an awareness of their rights. Anti-oppressive practice needs to happen at both individual and structural level; whether ensuring young people feel included in a group, or working with organisations to develop structures which enable young people to influence decision making.

Chapters in the second half of the book on using research and supervision, and managing projects, provide clear, practical advice relevant to professionals in many settings. Particularly useful are the rationale and practical suggestions for organisations who wish to improve their services through increasing youth participation.

This book has an appealing format and layout: text broken by frequent tables of diagrams, practice examples and summaries. Each chapter concludes with a summary of the skills discussed, and a glossary and suggestions for further reading make this a very useful resource. While students will find this book very accessible, social workers will find it a helpful resource to audit the responsiveness of their practice and organisation to the needs of young people.

Geldard, K. (ed.) (2009). *Practical interventions for young people at risk*. London: Sage Publications. 213 pages. Paperback.

As with the two previous books *Practical interventions for young people at risk* (Geldard, 2009) promotes engaging collaboratively with young people, promoting self-care and building

resilience. But it has a more clinical approach, addressing a range of issues and behaviours which interfere with young people's development: bullying, self-harm, substance abuse, eating disorders, firefighting, and also suicide.

Most chapters provide a description of the problem, its causes and risk factors, and an evaluation of current treatments. Carr's chapter on combating depression discusses prevention, assessment and the evidence base for a range of treatments, whereas Sellen's chapter on empowering young people who self-harm describes a training programme which addresses the need for attitudinal change required to improve practitioners' insight and effectiveness. Thompson, Tippet and Smith describe proactive and reactive strategies for schools to counter bullying, including restorative and peer responses.

Ian Lambie is the sole New Zealand contributor with a chapter on young people with sexual behaviour problems. He highlights Australia and New Zealand's use of community-based interventions for the majority of sexually abusive youth, in contrast to the predominance of residential treatments elsewhere. He also refers to research which confirms outcomes for Māori clients are enhanced when they have a Māori therapist, and particularly when cultural components were incorporated into treatment.

Geldard's own research into peer counselling provides helpful insights into how best to enhance peer support. She advocates a training programme but cautions against insisting young people adopt counselling skills which are not compatible with young people's usual conversational style.

The format of this book makes it an easy one to dip into for information – each chapter ending with a summary, resources, key points, questions and references.

Few would deny Geldard's (2009) assertion that we need to encourage the community 'to accept collective responsibility for the importance, empowerment, rights, well-being and humanity of young people' (p 7). These are at the heart of the social work endeavor. It is important that social workers working with young people are well informed about current research and practice in this field. These three publications provide a broad and stimulating base. While none of them originates from here, they are all sympathetic to the goals of positive youth development as outlined in New Zealand's Youth Development Strategy (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002): strengths-based approach, quality relationships, youth participation and an informed approach. Those who wish to keep up with issues, research and practice relating to the well-being of New Zealand youth will find it particularly useful to join Ara Taiohi, a new national umbrella organisation for the youth sector which combines New Zealand Aotearoa Adolescent Health and Development (NZAAHD) and the National Youth Workers' Network Aotearoa (NYWNA).

Joanne Hope

Teen Parent Service Coordinator, St John of God Waipuna, Christchurch.

References

Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2002). *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth.

Simcock, A., & Duncan L. (2010). *Hidden in front of us*. Hamilton: Maruki Books. 184 pages. Paperback. Available \$24.95 online at www.hiddeninfrontofus.com and www.childmatters.org.nz.

The incidence of child abuse in New Zealand has long been a cause of concern. In her mission to make New Zealand the safest place in the world to raise children, Anthea Simcock, as the CEO of Child Matters, has identified the need to make the prevalence and incidents of child abuse more visible to the general population through the publication of the stories of 24 New Zealanders who have survived child abuse. This book is explicitly written in an accessible style for a broad audience in order to try to reverse the disturbing child abuse statistics in this country. The belief is that through the talking and sharing of stories adults will acknowledge the extent of the problem, communities will be empowered to speak out and most importantly children will know that it is safe to tell.

Using quotes from those interviewed as headings and to illustrate points made, the book is divided into three parts: Living with abuse, Recognising what can be hidden in front of you and Survival. Each part contains four or five chapters, for example, Fear and ignorance, Don't expect children to disclose, Getting people to listen and to help can be so hard and How it comes out, are the titles of the chapters on Living with abuse. Each chapter highlights the complexities involved for the children concerned and their skillfulness in working out how best to survive. The layout and presentation of the book means it can be easily dipped into. Once the reader gets a taste of the anecdotal insights you just want to keep reading.

Emotional, sexual and physical abuse and neglect are all covered and survivors come from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Eleven of the 24 survivors who share their stories chose to reveal aspects of their identities and of these only three identified as Māori. While it is not made clear how survivors were selected to share their stories this book usefully illustrates that child abuse does occur in white middle-class homes and debunks the myth that child abuse is a Māori problem.

The latter part of the book is most useful in that it focuses on what would help, how to do this and where to go. It does not attempt to address the structural issues surrounding addressing child abuse, as the aim is to empower the general population to respond to the issue. A companion work booklet could be a useful complement to this resource to assist in the education and training of human service industry professionals. Here the ethical aspects of the project could be clearly spelt out as a valuable teaching tool and questions could be developed to draw forward the key learning from each chapter.

In terms of achieving the stated aims *Hidden in front of us* uncovers what we all need to see and know in a manner that is accessible and honouring of the stories shared. It is recommended reading for all New Zealanders and will be of particular value to persons who are frequently in the company of children, for example teachers, health professionals, sports coaches and church personnel.

Helen Simmons
ANZASW Book Review Editor.