

*Please Help Me With This Family* is an edited collection of chapters written by an international group of family therapists who use consultation within a systemic/experiential framework. The value of consultation is located in its capacity to introduce new perspectives and uncertainty into stuck therapeutic systems—rather than any special insight the consultant might have into the content of the problem. The first section of the book outlines the history of consultation in family therapy. Section two and three discuss how consultants from the client's system (children, friends, co-workers, families of origin) and the therapist's system (colleagues, master therapists) can be used to prevent or transcend therapeutic impasses. The final section looks at how consultation can enhance training and professional development.

The book is generally oriented to application rather than theory. Practical guidelines are provided for a variety of situations, including the use of children and friends as consultants; coordination of multiple consultants in addiction therapy; conversion of problematic referral situations into consultations; use of families of origin to stimulate primary process change in client families; and use of consultation to prevent therapeutic impasses. Counsellors and counselling psychologists working with families will find these guidelines extremely useful in incorporating consultation into their work.

Many chapters in this book focus on the work of Maurizio Andolfi, both through Andolfi's own eyes as a consultant and user of consultative resources as well as through the eyes of those who have invited him to consult on their cases. Viewing Andolfi's work through many lenses gives the reader a flexible perspective on how consultative resources can be used and received in family therapy. Flexibility in the therapeutic system is also encouraged by Andolfi's slippery view of who the "expert" is in the room; by elevating members of the family's extended system to the role of consultant, the therapist empowers the family's social resources. And by encouraging professional consultants to keep the responsibility for clients with the therapist, consultation can empower the therapeutic system.

Overall, this book offers a well-written, coherent account of a systemic/experiential approach to consultation in family therapy. Even though this book is aimed at family therapists, counsellors interested in applying systemic ideas to individual work will also finish reading this book excited about the creative potential of consultation to enrich and expand their therapeutic effectiveness.

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Combrinck-Graham, Lee (Ed.). (1995). *Children in Families at Risk: Maintaining the Connections*. New York: The Guilford Press. 429 pp. ISBN 0-89862-852-0.

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Lee Combrinck-Graham's edited collection, *Children in Families at Risk: Maintaining the Connections*, challenges the tradition of dismantling troubled families and boldly advocates strategies that empower families to stay together. Keeping at-risk children in connection with their families and utiliz-

ing the family unit as a source of its own rehabilitation requires professionals to adopt a more cooperative, respectful stance toward the families with whom they work. Combrinck-Graham urges professionals to approach families "with the assumption that the families, too, are concerned about, how their lives are unfolding and [that they] would be willing to change the course, if they could" (p. x). Such an orientation has implications for clinical practice and social policy.

The book is divided into six sections, each addressing different aspects of working with at-risk families. The first section, "Changing The Ways We Think About Engaging Families," challenges professionals to develop collaborative approaches to working with families in trouble. Emphasized here is the importance of making families part of their own treatment plans as opposed to simply being the object of such plans.

"Family Preservation," describes efforts to provide alternatives to the traditional policies of removing children from families in crisis and placing them in shelter or foster care. These chapters affirm that "many beleaguered families can take care of their children," given appropriate treatment and support (Combrinck-Graham, p. 82).

The third section, "Families of Children Placed in Institutions," emphasizes the curative power of attachment and family connections. These articles demonstrate that when institutional care becomes the treatment choice, effectiveness is greatly enhanced when family members are actively involved in the overall plan.

"Foster Care Options," includes articles which offer new models for foster care and which emphasize on-going involvement of biological families while children are in foster care. Such models aim to bridge relationships between foster and biological parents and to maintain the connection between children and their birth parents.

Chapters dealing with "Reunification" illustrate ways of mobilizing the family unit for successful reconciliation and emphasize the importance of therapist neutrality. If families are treated like partners in this process, a positive outcome is much more likely.

Finally, "Connecting Programs," illustrates treatment programs which have been successful in involving families in their own recovery. Such programs reinforce the value of maintaining family connections throughout the treatment process.

*Children in Families at Risk* is well written and rich with clinical case material. The book should be of interest to students, teachers, and practitioners of counselling and social work, as well as to those who plan and finance government and agency policies for family welfare. While the programming described throughout the book reflects policy and practice throughout the United States, the theme of connection is universal. Indeed, as Canadians attempt to find ways to stretch dollars for social programming, exploration of ways to actively involve families in their own treatment may be quite timely.

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