

What we experience is the maturity and openness of these young people—a far cry from “beyond help” youth.

Another concern about the video is its lack of clarity regarding the target audience. For clinicians experienced in working with post-traumatic symptoms, there is no new information here. In fact, there is no reference to some of the salient information regarding treatment of trauma such as treating intrusive memories and altering core beliefs. However, if the intended audience is school personnel, parents, child care workers or foster parents, the second part of this documentary has some worthwhile and important things to say.

On a final note, both the discussion guide and the documentary refer to the manner in which our society has betrayed children living in abusive, trauma-inducing homes. This is an important point, and one that cannot be overlooked in attempting to provide meaningful change and prevention of childhood trauma. The producers speak to the implicit consensus which develops around some kids who are labeled “beyond help.” Too often, this justifies our lack of effort and leaves one more child to be victimized yet again by the system designed to provide aid. Our society does not yet have zero tolerance for the family abuses which give rise to childhood trauma. This documentary is a useful contribution to the field, a good resource to stimulate discussion, and a good tool to educate.

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Pedersen, P. B. (1997). *Culture-centred counselling interventions: Striving for accuracy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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The title of this book leads the reader to expect a collection of multicultural therapy techniques; however its actual focus is the development of the author's “culture-centered” theory of counselling. Pedersen's central premise is that counsellors must consider the cultural context that gives meaning to their client's behaviour; the ability to match client behaviour with the appropriate cultural context is the essence of the culture-centred approach. However, the term culture is used to refer not only to concepts of ethnicity and nationality but demographic (e.g., age) and status (e.g., economic) variables, among others. This broad definition of culture prepares counsellors to track the multiple and often shifting cultural referent groups that can be reflected (e.g., age to gender) during the course of an interview. For example, a client's difficulties might be understood in the context of her struggles as a woman and/or as an ethnic minority individual.

This ambitious book is divided into three parts. The author sketches his culture-centred approach to counselling in Part One. Part Two expands on the approach's assumptions through discussions of how it may be applied in different counselling contexts. Part Three consists of a discussion of ethical and training issues, along with a review of the principal content areas covered by the book.

It is in Part One that Pedersen does his best work. He clearly articulates the strengths and weaknesses of both the broad and narrow definitions of culture in the course of arguing for the former. The description of the communication differences that could be expected from members of Western versus non-Western cultures as a function of their differential reliance on context cues is another strength. I was most heartened, however, by reading the discussion of unintentional racism. As an East Indian woman, my own experience of others' "colour blindness" has led me to feel that important parts of myself were overlooked or denied.

Part Two also contains much of value. Its major strengths are the chapters on religious and spiritual contexts and international students, respectively. The author skillfully argues that counsellors should consider the religious and spiritual values of their clients. He debunks the traditional view of counselling as value-free and cites research which suggests that spiritual factors facilitate healthy functioning. Pedersen also uses case examples to illustrate the centrality of religion in the lives of non-Westerners.

The case examples are a highlight. The author discusses the counselling functions that are fulfilled by such religious practices as relying on Confucian sayings, in addition to exploring the complementary role that counselling itself can play to such practices. The chapter on international students stands out as the most comprehensive of the book. It includes a discussion of counselling issues germane to international students, critical incidents of common problems, assessment issues, and discussion of the role of counselor as advocate in institutional policy issues. Of particular interest are the critical incidents which reflect the author's personal expertise in this counselling area.

In the last chapter of this section the author appears to be moving outside of his range of expertise and perhaps should have switched roles to that of editor of guest contributions. His brief outline of family systems models is both confusing and outdated. Theories that were popular in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Communication theory and Bowenian theory) are included in a list of contemporary theories which excludes narrative and solution-focused approaches. Although Pedersen argues that the culture-centred perspective complements rather than replaces traditional theories, he develops no connection between these traditional theories and the culturally sensitive family models for which he advocates.

Part Three also has problems. The section on training is thin, relying almost exclusively on one training exercise. Pedersen also runs into difficulty when he takes on the complex issue of ethics in a cross-cultural context. He proposes what he calls a universalist approach to resolving ethical problems, which he sees as an alternative to the extremes of both absolutism and relativism. However Pedersen fails to escape the dilemma that any principles used to evaluate behaviour cross-culturally will themselves be culture-bound. The Chinese meaning of justice may be very different from the Canadian meaning of justice.

Pedersen's solutions speak directly to the concerns of counsellors overwhelmed by their clients' multiple cultural identities. But he advances overly simplistic solutions to difficult and possibly even irresolvable problems in

order to sell the approach. In the end, his book underestimates the complexity of cross-cultural issues. This happens despite the fact that the author himself argues for the complexity of culture as a "positive force that keeps you from accepting easy answers to difficult questions" (p. 29).

The book provides a useful model for conceptualizing cultural issues in counselling. It is less useful in the area of practical suggestions for working with culturally different clients. Although I liked the framework for multicultural counselling that the cross-cultural approach provides, the book's many problems, particularly in its final section, left me disappointed with its realization.

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