
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Roger D. Herring (1999). *Counseling with Native American Indians and Alaska Natives: Strategies for helping professionals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

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Counseling with First Nations is an area fraught with problems. Utilization rates are low, drop outs high, and we regularly hear frustration from both clients and counsellors. *Counseling with Native American Indians and Alaska Natives* is a new addition to the literature in this important area. The book, the fourteenth in the SAGE series, "Multicultural Aspects of Counselling," which includes titles by Brislin, Pedersen, Samuda, and Sue, appears to be aimed primarily at non-Native counsellors intending to work with native populations.

Herring's book has an opening chapter that establishes the context, followed by content-area chapters on assessment, youth, adults, career development, and creative arts. It ends with a short (14 page) chapter on training, practice, and research implications, and a shorter appendix listing a variety of supplementary resources. In each chapter there are useful lists of summaries to the counsellor and practical insets entitled "Something to Consider." The greatest utility of the book lies in the introductory theories in each chapter and in the lists. Theories about acculturation, shamanism, power differentials, bi-ethnicity, and language development give the reader a cognitive set that is useful in understanding the concrete advice presented later. The lists tell us to recognize in-group variances, address openly cultural differences, make flexible appointments, allow family members to participate, allow time for trust to develop, respect the use of silence, etc.

The application in the Canadian context is difficult, despite the fact that our country falls precisely between the "Native American Indians" and the "Alaskan Natives." The resources in the book are virtually all American, and this limits the usefulness to the Canadian reader. The book cites a large number of Canadian authors including Christensen, Berry, Darou, Kim, and Samuda. Oddly, it cites none of our substantial First Nations writers.

A key principle of the book appears to be that there are far too many clients for the First Nations professionals available. This situation is less true in Canada. For example, in 1980, there were only three Native psychologists; today there are 40. The demographics, statistics, and legal questions have no applicability, the reservation system and the language patterns are not the same, and the Canadian genocide followed a different process.

Despite its limitations, *Counseling with Native American Indians and Alaska Natives* could be a useful addition to the counsellor's library. However, this volume points to the need of a Canadian-based book on counselling Canada's First Nations. One of our own First Nations authors, such as Rod McCormick from the University of British Columbia, could undoubtedly produce a better volume for the Canadian market.