

Book Review / Compte rendu

Morrisette, P. J. (2004). *The pain of helping. Psychological injury of helping professionals*. New York: Brunner-Routledge. ISBN 0-415-94552-6 (pbk). 149 pages.

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Patrick Morrisette's book (2004) *The Pain of Helping: Psychological Injury of Helping Professionals* is an essential "must read" for individuals working or studying in the helping professions. The author sets out to provide a comprehensive guide for practitioners, educators, researchers, and students who face the deleterious effects of working with survivor populations in the field of trauma. His stated purpose is to consolidate information regarding the various ways helping professionals are psychologically impacted by their work and to "provide readers with a one-stop source wherein prominent psychological injury constructs are clearly defined, consolidated, and accessible" (p. xx).

The psychological terms covered in Morrisette's book are: stress, acute stress disorder (ASD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compassion fatigue/secondary traumatic stress (STS), critical incidence stress (CIS), vicarious traumatization (VT), and finally, burnout. The author also presents the most up-to-date debates regarding the status of these psychological terms and represents the research of the most renowned traumatologists in the field. The author notes that construct clarification is essential as many of the terms have been used interchangeably and mistakenly. Given the vast quantity of literature available on many of these psychological terms, Morrisette's synthesis was no easy task.

The general layout of the book is user-friendly and practical. The first chapter offers: (a) a historical overview of the study of trauma, (b) the symptomology and effects on various populations, and (c) the changing perception of psychological injury in the human sciences from a pathological view to a normative view of human response under duress. Each of the following seven chapters is each devoted to one of the psychological terms currently being used in the field: stress, ASD, PTSD, STS, CIS, VT, and burnout. These chapters are extremely well organized, thoroughly researched and provide a comprehensive coverage of the current information available. Morrisette provides a clinical case vignette of each psychological term, an overview of the historical background in the development of the term, a description of the symptomology, the affected populations, and current interventions being used with each psychological term presented. Resources pertaining to both evaluation of diagnostic assessments for each psychological term and information (such as books, manuals, and organizations) appear at the end of each chapter. The reader is able to use Morrisette's rich database to further explore these psychological terms in more depth. The author also provides references to organizational web sites, journals, and associations specific to helping professionals.

For anyone wishing to become informed about the historical background of these psychological terms, the construct definitions in current use, related outcome research, and interventions employed for each of these terms, this book is invaluable. I will definitely be promoting this book in our counselling program for clinical instructors, practitioners, and counselling students as this truly is a “one-stop resource” on psychological stress among the helping professions.