

a review of some theorists and their influences, the essential style is set for the "briefer than brief" counsellor: counselling as not necessarily being less successful if it is brief (Sperry); problems as being maintained by unsuccessful solutions (Fisch, Weakland & Segal); a need for clients to change irrational thinking for change in behaviour to occur (Ellis); as well as a thorough focus on shifting the presenting problem into goals and tackling those goals through understanding past successful and unsuccessful solutions (de Shazer). These influences are combined to form the essential core of a brief counselling session, arbitrarily wrapped up into twenty minutes. The authors offer a sample "twenty-minute hour" that demonstrates the integration of the above principles. One of the final chapters even addresses how to apply the principles to couples and families.

Although the content is not necessarily novel the mixture of the various components is somewhat refreshing. It cites core concepts of solution-based therapies, and puts them into practice in understandable examples. Counsellors not versed in the "strategic" paradigm, students, or those needing a fairly concrete summary of methods of implementing this type of therapy would benefit from reading this book. One who has been introduced to de Shazer's work however would find very little new in this book, except a drive to do solution-oriented therapy in twenty minutes.

After reading the book, one gets the impression that the mode of counselling being presented is seemingly indicated as a type of panacea. Little direction is given as to the types of situations that would best lend themselves to the "twenty-minute" counselling routine. Rather, the focus in this book is somewhat uncomfortably focused on using a style that is appropriate for the counsellor's time demands and not necessarily for the type of client and type of issue. Greater clarity and elucidation should have been given to elaborating what types of issues and persons the modality is most productive for as well as situations where caution is best advised. It would appear that clients must be extremely motivated to change, and the issue must be one that lends itself to solution through brief brainstorming sessions. Additionally, behind any successful twenty-minute counsellor is a repertoire of sound judgment and wisdom that takes years to acquire.

Abraham, Suzanne & Llewellyn-Jones, Derek. (3rd edition, 1992). *Eating Disorders: The Facts*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada. 190 pp., \$18.50 CDN.

Reviewed by: Rosa Spricer, Psychologist, Edmonton, Alberta.

The title of this book, *Eating Disorders: The Facts*, hints at both the strengths and the limitations of this work. The authors are medical doctors (in Obstetrics/Gynaecology) who have worked with eating disordered patients. They attempt to present a comprehensive, detailed picture, based on empirical data, of what is currently "known" about eating disorders—their causes, symptoms, and forms of treatment. A third of the book is devoted to a

discussion of eating disorders in general. Such disorders are defined, diagnostic criteria are listed, and possible causes are presented. The authors then examine anorexia, bulimia and obesity separately.

The book seems very much written for medical practitioners, who may be uninterested in psychological or social theorizing. The usefulness of the book, then, is that it contains certain basic facts crucial for any helping professional who works in the area. For example, Abraham and Llewellyn-Jones clearly delineate the psychological, physiological and biochemical disturbances that may accompany or result from disordered eating. They also provide significant data about which forms of treatment have been clearly shown by research to be ineffective and/or dangerous. They emphasize the importance of a multi-disciplinary and team approach to eating disorders. In addition, they demonstrate in the section on bulimia a basic understanding of the issues and a consistency which is missing from the discussions of anorexia and obesity.

However, the strict adherence to empirical data, combined with a lack of psychological depth and a stream of contradictory statements, makes for a frustrating read. The case histories are a good example. Except for very occasionally, when an insightful patient speaks for herself, the authors limit themselves to behavioural descriptions of patients, so that the reader gets a history of weight loss and/or gain, and a description of weight loss methods. This approach provides the reader with as little insight as it would provide to a patient. In fact, the absence of psychological insight and of a coherent therapeutic vision is often startling. It is hard to believe that professionals working in the field of eating disorders would write simplistic statements such as, "Eating disorders occur because a person loves food. . . ."

Abraham and Llewellyn-Jones point out the importance of understanding the social and psychological dimensions of eating disorders but rarely provide this in the book. For example, they have included a section on sexuality in which they describe, in behavioural terms, the sexual patterns which patients tend to manifest. There is no attempt to discuss why sexuality is so often an issue, nor is any mention made of the possible link to abuse.

It is interesting to note that the authors use the same language of control, avoidance, and diet that their patients do. Statements such as "She has to control her food intake to control her weight" are common. There is no indication from the authors that they believe it is possible for a person to learn to be in tune with her/his bodily needs and cues to behave accordingly with ease and without fear of food. The notion of empowerment, fundamental to the change process, is missing.

The most disturbing feature of the book, however, is the contradictions. The most glaring examples are found in the treatment of obesity. Abraham and Llewellyn-Jones state that research has demonstrated quite clearly that strict diets, crash diets and "crazy" diets do not work. They then include in their list of possible helpful interventions a milk diet, a 300-450 calorie diet, and jaw-wiring. They voice their support of "sensible" dieting methods such as Weight Watchers and TOPS, but make no mention of the fact that studies have indicated that the long term success rate for these methods is also minimal, between 5% and 10%.

The authors state, "The modern approaches to the problem [obesity] are first to achieve the weight loss and second to maintain the lower weight by reinforcing the resolve of the person through periodic intervention in the form of supportive psychotherapy." My experience is that this rarely works. If desired weight changes are to be lasting, psychotherapy needs to precede these changes or to be an integral part of the process. In addition, Abraham and Llewellyn-Jones include suction lipectomy as a treatment option for obesity, even as they acknowledge that it is a cosmetic procedure and not a treatment for generalized obesity. This seems irresponsible, and indicates to me that the writers have no understanding of the meaning that weight and food and body image can have, especially for women. Perhaps the book is such a patchwork of contradictory facts because it is not grounded in a cohesive philosophy.

In general, the book has little to offer a counsellor who is looking for deeper insight or for useful ways of working with clients who have disordered eating. There are better books on the market, such as those by Geneen Roth or the handbook by Garner and Garfinckle. I would be especially reluctant to recommend this book to a novice practitioner who might be unable to discriminate the helpful information from the questionable.

Sinclair, Carollyne. (1994). *Looking for Home—A Phenomenological Study of Home in the Classroom*. Albany, NY: State University of New York. 168 pp., \$14.95 us, pb.

Reviewed by: Gerald R. Guest, University of Victoria.

With brilliance and sensitivity Carolynne Sinclair offers teachers and counsellors a thought-provoking, emotional journey. Her purpose is to illustrate how a deeply caring teacher can help to create a classroom world for children which fosters a sense of home. Sinclair's construct of home is "where we learn about self and others"—about an ever-expanding world.

The author suggests "home" has different constructed meanings for each of us. "Home is where you start from," declared a greeting card that one of my grateful daughters offered to her mother. Robert Frost, in *The Hired Man*, tells us that home is ". . . Something you somehow haven't to deserve." Sinclair suggests that, "Home, then, is that which provides us with the sense of communion with others that helps the individual self emerge." It's a place, suggests the author, where each of us can lie down with our loved ones in silent communion, in safe security. Home nurtures and nourishes. Home also provides a safe form in which to learn the breadth and depth of human emotion and the complexities of human behaviour.

Sinclair achieves that sense of classroom home as she illustrates a series of themes via classroom vignettes (stories) which serve as windows through which we readers are privileged to witness the intimacy and moving emotional journey of this remarkable sole teacher and two classes of third to fifth grade souls. Examples abound as in John's angry starvation for