
Friesen, J. D. (1985). *Structural-Strategic Marriage and Family Therapy*. New York: Gardner Press.

Reviewed by: Carey J. Denholm, School of Child Care,
University of Victoria

Given the current extent of literature available in the family therapy field, at first glance *Structural-Strategic Marriage and Family Therapy* by Dr. John Friesen may appear as yet another publication seeking to "make it" within the widening family therapy-education market. However, this text does serve as a stimulating, practical and timely resource.

Printed in soft cover, it consists of 10 chapters on such topics as couple and family dynamics, family and couple assessment, communication, conflict resolution and key structural-strategic therapy skills. A concluding chapter provides a listing of relevant journals and 465 key references on family therapy.

From the perspective of the graduate student, the text is designed as an in-class learning tool with most chapters containing three conceptual sections: theoretical perspective, explanations of key approaches and techniques, and references. Graphic illustrations, vignettes from family therapy sessions and particularly the chapter on training exercises, make this a readable and useful graduate level resource.

For the marital and family therapist working with a divergent caseload, the text contains a comparative analysis of individual therapy approaches, a range of practical activities to be used during family sessions and a concise introduction to the integration of structural and strategic family therapy. Articulation of the interface between the theory of family (structural therapy) and theory of change (strategic therapy) may be considered brief; additional readings are suggested.

In the first chapter, Dr. Friesen clearly describes the concepts, interventions and rules involved as a structural-strategic family therapist. It is at this point, that the appearance of the text as a "how to" book diminishes, and the presentation of an intensive, integrative and focused approach begins. Normal family functioning and competence rather than family pathology is emphasized and a systems orientation to the family life cycle, sibling dynamics and special problems such as anorexia are adequately covered. The Structural-Strategic Family Assessment Scale, and Family Therapy Skills Training Inventory, are useful additions.

In the preface, the author states, "an effort has been made to produce a clear and succinct overview of structural and strategic understandings, concepts and techniques of marriage and family therapy . . . combined to form an integrated system of clinical practice." These are not only brave, but true words, and from this reviewer's perspective, two comments should be added. The first is that this is an engaging, pragmatic and well referenced text, and the second, a warning, is that it should not be used without supervised training.