

## *Book Review / Compte rendu*

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Kassan, A., & Moodley, R. (Eds.). (2022). *Diversity and social justice in counseling, psychology, and psychotherapy: A case study approach*. Cognella. ISBN: 978-1-5165-4859-0, xxiv + 405 pp.

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### ABSTRACT

An increasing focus on issues of diversity and social justice in counselling, psychology, and psychotherapy has been met with a range of responses and potential paths forward. In *Diversity and Social Justice in Counseling, Psychology, and Psychotherapy: A Case Study Approach*, editors Anusha Kassan and Roy Moodley assemble an exciting collection of new work from veterans and emerging scholars. This work challenges traditional conceptions of multicultural practice, broadens the range of conversations about diversity, and considers how issues of intersectionality affect the impact of different identities in practice. The incorporation of a case study into each chapter lends coherence to the array of styles and approaches represented in the collection and provides a practical application of theoretical considerations. Novice and experienced practitioners, instructors, and students will find both enjoyment and critical insights in this book.

### RÉSUMÉ

Une attention croissante accordée aux enjeux de diversité et de justice sociale en counseling, psychologie, et psychothérapie a suscité une gamme diversifiée de réponses et de pistes possibles. Dans *Diversity and Social Justice in Counseling, Psychology, and Psychotherapy: A Case Study Approach* [Diversité et justice sociale en counseling, psychologie et psychothérapie : Études de cas], Anusha Kassan et Roy Moodley ont réuni une passionnante collection de nouveaux travaux issus de chercheurs chevronnés et émergents. Ce volume remet en question les conceptions traditionnelles du multiculturalisme, élargit l'éventail des conversations sur la diversité, et examine comment les questions d'intersectionnalité ont une incidence sur les différentes identités dans l'exercice de la profession. L'insertion d'une étude de cas dans chaque chapitre assure une cohérence entre les divers styles et approches représentés dans la collection et fournit une application pratique des considérations théoriques. Ce nouvel ouvrage,

de lecture agréable, apportera aussi des points de vue critiques aux professionnels novices et aguerris, aux formateurs, et aux étudiants.

*Diversity and Social Justice in Counseling, Psychology, and Psychotherapy: A Case Study Approach* was edited by Anusha Kassan and Roy Moodley, both scholars with significant prior work in multicultural and diversity issues in counselling psychology. Dr. Kassan is an associate professor in the School and Applied Child Psychology program at the University of British Columbia, a member of *Canadian Psychology's* editorial board, and a former chair of the Section on Counselling Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association. She has published numerous articles on cultural competencies in counselling and migrant experiences, her areas of research focus. Dr. Moodley is an associate professor of counselling psychology at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, associate editor of *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, and director of the Centre for Diversity in Counselling and Psychotherapy. He has written or edited over a dozen books on topics such as intercultural counselling and psychotherapy, integrating traditional healing practices in counselling and psychotherapy, gender and identity, and global psychologies.

This book marks Kassan and Moodley's first collaboration with each other. It offers a series of critical perspectives on the ways that counselling, psychology, and psychotherapy are practised in diverse contemporary societies, considering how facets such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and class function and interact to produce challenges and opportunities in the therapeutic space. To this end, the book relies on analyses and clinical case studies from prominent and emerging scholars across North America such as Pratyusha Tumalla-Narra, Clemmont Vontress, and Anjali Forber-Pratt. Its contributors cover a wide range of topics, broadening the conversation on diversity to include subjects—such as weightism and ethical non-monogamy—that are often left out of traditional approaches to diversity and multiculturalism in the above fields.

The book's 27 chapters, each from a different author or set of authors, are divided into five parts. Part I relates various histories, philosophies, and social justice considerations that are relevant to the current state of multicultural practice, illuminating some of the biases and limitations that continue to impact Eurocentric psychologies. Part II covers approaches to diversity from well-known, established theories and offers recommendations for assessment, case conceptualization, treatment planning, and relationship management from psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, humanistic/client-centred, existential, and cognitive-behavioural lenses. Part III provides contemporary lenses for analyzing diversity intended to complement more traditional theories, introducing feminist, queer, and contextual action theories, among others. Part IV discusses different dimensions of socio-cultural identity, considering how these dimensions intersect

with and affect clinical processes. Finally, Part V takes a closer look at social justice, transnational, and human rights perspectives and their clinical applications, focusing on issues that the editors believe have been under-represented in previous literature.

Unsurprisingly, given the book's mixed authorship, there is significant variability in the style and length of its chapters. For example, some authors incorporate first-person narration and personal anecdotes, while others maintain a more formal and objective style. Whether this diversity of styles is seen as a boon or as a misfortune will likely depend on the personal preferences of each reader. Still, it is worth noting that this stylistic variability reflects an overarching theme of the collection: that diverse perspectives ultimately cannot and should not be confined within a single paradigm of communication. The structuring of each chapter around a relevant case study also helps lend a sense of cohesion to the book's diverse materials.

Although the chapters' lack of uniformity is occasionally jarring, the editors' achievement in bringing together such a range of perspectives is arguably the book's most outstanding feature. The collection's diversity is represented not only in its subject matter and in the identities of its contributing authors but also in the array of philosophical approaches it considers. For instance, it is uncommon to find philosophers such as Slavoj Žižek and Martin Buber discussed in such close proximity to cognitive behavioural theory and similar mainstays of contemporary psychotherapy, especially when the relation between these streams of thought is not solely one of critique. Yet, the book is structured in such a way that these theoretical angles are both combined and contrasted in a productive manner, shedding light on how complex philosophical considerations can be approached in everyday practice. The collection would function well as a course textbook: much of the material is easily accessible to students who are beginning their explorations of the field, and the book is effective in its introduction of approaches to diversity and social justice from several perspectives that may appeal to early practitioners. More advanced practitioners will also find material of interest: many chapters provide novel, engaging critiques and elaborations of well-known approaches to multicultural practice.

Finally, the collection frequently makes for a gripping read. Jeff King's contribution in the first chapter sets the tone for the rest of the book. Therein, King argues that often, "in our efforts to undo racism and social injustice, we end up perpetuating the very thing we seek to remedy" (p. 3). What is needed to escape this vicious cycle is not simple lip service to issues of social justice and intersectionality but serious reconsideration of the structures of thought that underpin our way of being. I believe that this book marks a substantive attempt at that daunting task. Still, the book does not always live up to King's enjoinders. King challenges us to allow diverse cultural frameworks to speak for themselves without imposing a Western world view and Western terminology upon them;

later chapters are not always equal to this challenge. For instance, we are told that “indigeneity involves a holistic view of relational wellness” (p. 127) or “a holistic model of wellbeing and prevention” (p. 264), but these views are largely summarized using external, Western language rather than the terms of the Indigenous cultures being described. Similarly, it is claimed that Indigenous peoples’ religion “offers them an alternative explanation for understanding their struggles ... and provides them with coping strategies” (p. 264), but such alternative explanations are never elaborated upon from an Indigenous perspective. Put succinctly, there is room for improvement. Nonetheless, this book’s many bold and passionately articulated cases mark a significant step in the right direction.

### **About the Author**

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