
Book Reviews

Book Reviews Editor: Jonathan Dickens

In the Firing Line: Violence and Power in Child Protection Work

Janet Stanley and Chris Goddard

John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 2002, 224 pp. £17.99.

ISBN 0 471 99885 0

Are abused children, non-abusing parents, and social workers in a hostage-like situation? This is the contention of Stanley and Goddard who in their empirically based examination of the work of child protection workers in Victoria, Australia note 'the picture we have described is grim' (p. 163). The book begins with some scene setting, describing four case studies, one of which (Robert, 10) they revisit at the end to illustrate their main points. After reviewing some of the history of child protection services (which appears to start in 1971), they examine the impact of child abuse fatality on child protection systems in Australia, the USA and the UK, noting that studies of such fatalities have significant methodological limitations (a point strongly supported by this reviewer), and do not locate the neglect of, and violence to, children in the context of violence within the family and more broadly. They also examine the evidence of re-abuse (or repeat abuse) and find that despite historical and cross-country variations it is clear that (i) a large proportion of children continue to be abused after abuse is uncovered and (ii) there is no indication that the severity of the abuse diminishes. They use this as evidence that 'the protection afforded to the more severely abused children was inadequate' (p. 60), a disturbing indictment which prompts them to consider why this might be the case.

They explore the nature of the social worker–client relationship, how it applies within child protection contexts, the lack of emphasis in the relationship on work with men, and a consideration of the presence and significance of violence in the context within which social workers operate. They note: 'The need for partnership is proposed in spite of violence, and there is still a tendency to view all or most power residing with the social worker' (pp. 86–87). This is

followed up by illustrative material from the Victorian study.

Chapters 7 and 8 contain the theoretical core of the book, hostage theory, its application to child protection workers and its links with child protection failure. Drawing on terrorist hostage situations (for example that of Patty Hearst), they include reference to Stockholm Syndrome, reality distortion (e.g. under-recall of violence), trauma and the significance of isolation. In their empirical work they define trauma scores, isolation scores and hostage response scores for their subjects, and correlate these with other factors.

Further material in the book revisits some of the earlier themes, highlights the significance of non-physical violence (threat and intimidations), and focuses on what should be done. There is a discussion of the role of supervision and management in providing a supportive context for workers. Addressing isolation is seen as a significant feature.

This is an excellent book and well worth a read by anyone involved in protecting children from abuse, despite a tendency to perhaps overstate. One is tempted by the extreme nature of some of the examples provided to speculate: Does the situation in Australia reflect a worse situation there than perhaps elsewhere in the world? Some of the examples seem almost to defy belief. A situation is described in which a worker feels the need to tone down the description of the abuse presented to the court because it was suggested the court would not believe material that was so extreme. In another case (that of Robert, above), the legal representative for the child protection agency agreed with the family solicitor for a child to be returned to a pervasively violent situation, despite opposition of the child protection workers. The possibility that the situation is perhaps worse in some respects in Australia than in other parts of the world comes from the statement of one of the research subjects: 'It opened my eyes when I went overseas and worked . . . It is only when you step outside, that you realise what you take' (p. 136). This should not detract from the overall powerful messages contained within this book that practitioners and managers in child protection need to be aware of.

Where does this fit in with the emphasis on shifting away from heavy-ended child protection intervention in favour of family support in the last half decade? The authors are clear at several points that they are mostly talking about the most difficult cases within the child protection arena, but this perhaps needed even more contextualization than that. Otherwise, it runs the risk of simply taking up its place on one side of the child welfare see-saw which within child protection has seen the swing of the pendulum from aggressive interventionist child protection policies and procedures (based on professional and agency vulnerabilities in the wake of high profile inquiries) to the current trend of clawing back some families (where the risk, although present, is seen as perhaps less extreme) from a child protection system which in those circumstances is seen to do more harm than good. Indeed, it could be seen as a useful text for developing an argument that what is needed is different approaches *within* child protection rather than a different approach *of* child protection.

Robert Sanders

SSSID (Applied Social Studies)
University of Wales, Swansea

Imprisoned Fathers and their Children

Gwyneth Boswell and Peter Wedge

Jessica Kingsley, London, 2002, 175 pp. £15.95. ISBN 1 85302 972 6

This is an interesting and welcome addition to the body of literature about the impact imprisonment has upon families. No one will deny the pain and distress which is liable to be caused by the imprisonment of a parent, for both parties. Dating back to the early work of Pauline Morris (1965), this subject has received rather fitful attention over the past 30 years. This work follows in that tradition but seeks to add an extra dimension by highlighting the issues within the justice/welfare paradox that surrounds imprisoned fathers and their children.

The vast majority of the book is concerned with reporting on a research project undertaken in the late 1990s. A concise review of the literature sets the scene then the following chapters examine the various aspects of the research.

Recent work on kin relationships in Britain and the United States suggests that, despite popular belief, these remain important in contemporary societies. The example of prisoners and their kin relationships

can be seen as representing a critical case (if a rather extreme one) for the understanding of these relationships. The sustainability of father-child relationships, particularly in the light of increasing length of sentence handed down for drug and violent offences, is a recurring theme in this book.

This is clearly interesting for those students of the sociology of family life. More importantly for Boswell and Wedge it has implications for professionals working with both children and fathers. Children who do not have supported access to their imprisoned fathers are in particular need of help from teachers and social workers to enable them to express their feelings and prevent long-term damage. The authors make it very clear that visits to the prison, whilst important (and there are some insightful comments offered about how these are best facilitated), are not the only way of sustaining meaningful relationships between child and father. At the level of policy many of the Woolf Report's recommendations (Lord Justice Woolf and Judge Tumin 1991) have been implemented but this research clearly indicates that more needs to be done; for example, the development of all visits into child-centred events that do not compromise security.

The interpersonal dynamics underlying predicting reconviction and/or subsequent reoffending are poorly understood, and while the research findings reported here do not directly show how certain kinds of kin relationships and other formal and informal support networks might contribute to either an increase or a reduction in the long-term likelihood of reconviction, they provide some hints on how the reoffending risk might be reduced in the short term through the mobilization of supportive relatives and other mechanisms.

Penological effectiveness requires a more sophisticated understanding than exists at present of the forms and mechanisms of social support which are associated with a decreased risk of reconviction: that is, what makes help helpful in reducing offending. We need greater specificity about *how* attachment to others (and which others?) creates the conditions of 'interdependence' (Braithwaite 1989) which produce a lower risk of offending, and we need to think more generally about how to support those whom we imprison maintain relationships with their children.

This is a very good book. The balance between punishment of lawbreakers and maintaining family ties is a delicate one. Clearly on the evidence presented here there needs to be a perceptible shift in favour of the child. The work reported here is important not least

because it highlights areas of neglect and ignorance that should receive attention if we are serious about rehabilitation following punishment and of well-supported families as a resource in that process.

Ian Paylor

*Senior Lecturer and Social Work Tutor
Department of Applied Social Science
Lancaster University*

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What Works in Reducing Domestic Violence? A Comprehensive Guide for Professionals

Julie Taylor-Browne

Whiting and Birch, London, 2001, 390 pp. £16.95. ISBN 1 86177 036 7

To write about what works in reducing domestic violence the authors in this book inform you also about what *does not* work in relation to reducing domestic violence and *why* this does not work. In this sense the book is conceptual as well as empirical and is much more than solely an acknowledgement about what does work in reducing domestic violence. The suggestions about what does work are clearly outlined in bullet format in some chapters, thus providing a clear and focused read. A substantive framework of research and practice reinforce the suggestions about what does work in reducing domestic violence, allied with a concise overview of the methodology employed in each chapter. The methodology also notes the difficulty with assessing research from the United States and locating these findings in a specifically British context. A further quest of the book is to explore how the actual process of reducing domestic violence can be evaluated, and it is argued that such evaluation is difficult without an agreeable workable definition of what constitutes domestic violence coupled with a lack of information about how prevalent domestic violence actually is.

The cover of the book outlines nine service provisions that the book examines, including policing, law, probation, housing and social and health care. However, the initial three chapters focus on people who are directly affected by domestic violence and look at what issues need to be addressed when working with women and children survivors of violence and male perpetrators. The chapter on dealing with perpetrators is meticulously researched and provides an excellent overview of the substantive issues involved in working with men who use violence. Strengthening the view that primary prevention is crucial in terms of reducing domestic violence is the research finding from a sample of over a 1000 children that '[a]t all ages boys emerge as having a less clear understanding than girls of who is at fault in situations of domestic violence and as being more likely to excuse the perpetrator' (p. 91). In relation to evaluation of services the author comes to the conclusion that programmes for perpetrators should be evaluated if we are to learn more about whether or not men can change as a result of intervention but asks, 'Should this be less violence, no violence, no longer subjecting the partner to a life of fear or changing the man's attitude towards women more generally?' (p. 76). This is thought provoking indeed and reminds us that there are many issues that need to be explored further in relation to the evaluation of programmes for perpetrators.

Asking the reader to critically question issues relating to reducing domestic violence is a key feature of the book. For example, Chapter 9 looks at the meaning behind such terminology as 'advocacy' and 'outreach', two words which we hear so much of in domestic violence reports/documents, and asks is this a distinct shift from the terminology 'empowerment' and 'self help' or is it 'old wine in new bottles'? The authors make the distinction that advocacy involves fighting for justice or redressing abuses of power whereas empowerment focuses more on the individual rather than a collective form of social injustice (p. 243). Evaluating whether such terminology was 'old wine in new bottles' proved difficult for the authors because the author's interpretation of advocacy was not clearly spelled out in some reports on domestic violence. The chapter concludes with an overview of projects that highlight advocacy and outreach in action, which provides an operational example of how advocacy and outreach can and do work in practice.

Health care professionals will find the chapter on 'Assessing and Managing Risk' interesting in that it suggests that risk assessment should look at risk

factors associated with desistance to domestic violence as well as factors associated with the onset of domestic violence. The authors conclude that a significant risk factor of domestic violence is 'that of previous assault' (p. 314).

This book is courageous in that it attempts to address domestic violence in detail from a wide variety of perspectives. However, in doing this, the book has made the mistake of putting too much information into some chapters and as a result this reader felt 'overloaded' at times with facts, figures and recommendations. What adds to this is a repetition of research findings between chapters. Notwithstanding this the book challenges you to think critically about domestic violence practice and research, which is a significant achievement considering that domestic violence has been researched for the last 20 years.

Michele Croke

*Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University College Dublin*

Tackling Social Exclusion

John Pierson

Routledge, London, 2002, 256 pp. ISBN 0 415 25682 8 (hardback), £45.00; 0 415 25683 6 (paperback), £14.99

The text is published in association with *Community Care* as part of the social work skills series and meets the objectives of the series to build practice skills within a policy and research context whilst integrating these into the professional development of social workers. Pierson starts with the premise that social work with a focus on social exclusion will not only have new ways of working but also different ways of *thinking* about the people they work with.

The text is essentially practical and the structure and layout of the book makes it both an interesting read and potentially a useful handbook to refer to in particular contexts. The text is divided into three sections. The first three chapters provide a useful introduction to the concept of social exclusion, drawing on theory and policy examples, and moving on to explore the perspectives and approaches to social work practice with this framework in mind. The third chapter links these in developing five building blocks for tackling social exclusion: maximizing income and securing basic resources, strengthening social supports and networks, working in partnership with agencies and local organizations, creating channels of effective par-

ticipation for users, local residents and their organizations, and focusing on whole neighbourhoods. These provide the basis for the second section, which looks in turn at families, young adults and excluded adults. These chapters are bursting with examples drawing on policy and research as well as providing case examples and activities for the student. The final section is about the structural and organizational implications of neighbourhood work, the significance of race in all work in this area and the implications for social work of partnership and joined-up policy and practice.

The text is clearly set out with students in mind, although it will also be of significant value to both teachers and practitioners in the field. Each chapter sets out objectives, key points and key reading. Much of the strength of the text lies in the many case examples and activities. On the whole these are engaging and could provide a useful basis for class group work and discussion. The other significant strength is the variety of material which is drawn on from different disciplines, policy areas and research. The aim is to widen the perspectives of social workers and offer new possibilities for practice. In this the book is successful in that it will provide a starting point and, hopefully, an inspiration to social workers working within individual focused casework models. There are many tasters of theoretical, policy and practice research which Pierson clearly wants the social work student to pursue. However, Pierson takes an inclusive approach to the scope of social work and the text will be of wider interest to those working in health, education, criminal justice and community development, and to social policy students, with its emphasis on starting from the perspective of social exclusion and the possibilities of area based work and partnerships. They may learn something about social work through considering tackling social exclusion within a social work perspective based on the values of the profession.

This is illustrated in the chapter on working with families, which ranges from a discussion of child poverty, assessing children's needs, and maximizing household income, to developing a SureStart project and running a parents group. Given the current emphasis on area based initiatives, such as SureStart and the Children's Fund, practitioners from a number of fields will be working together, and tackling social exclusion will be their common purpose. This book should contribute to a shared understanding as well as widen the possibilities open to them when they

work together. The chapters on young people and adults follow a similar pattern.

The final chapter draws the book together around a theme of change, recognizing that organizations and individuals require techniques and frameworks within which to formulate changing ways of thinking about and tackling social exclusion. Although this is a rather cursory introduction to, for example, theory of change, evaluation and action learning, as with the rest of the book it provides a taste and plenty of examples to follow up.

Liz Ross

*Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of Birmingham*

Social Work in the British Isles

Malcolm Payne and Steven Shardlow (eds)

Jessica Kingsley, London and Philadelphia, 2002, 287 pp.
£16.95. ISBN 1 85302 763 4

This is a comparative study of social work across the British Isles, with a chapter each on social work in England, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Guernsey along with introductory and concluding chapters by the editors. Each of the 'geographical' chapters is essentially an historical and contemporary summary of social work law, policy and practice and to a lesser extent education and research. The book's central (although it later turns out first) theme is that social work across this region contains many complexities and much diversity. The book also includes a good deal of background and often quite detailed information about each country or island's political and social history, and there is a short appendix about the British Isles. There are even maps, although as a native Devonian living in Norfolk I wondered why the northern-based editors chose to include a map of the British Isles which curiously omits any cities east of London or south and west of Southampton and Bristol.

More seriously, I grew impatient with the amount of criticism about the 'imperialistic' English. I saw little hard evidence for the following statement at the start of a chapter: 'The English have a view of themselves as a special and chosen people living in a uniquely favoured country' (p. 29) and for this one which concluded it: 'The English assumption of centrality, and dare it be spoken, "superiority" in social services provision is, as yet, undented' (p. 73). We

learn in a later chapter that until fairly recently in Ireland the NSPCC and CCETSW were British outposts, but so what? Were both oppressive simply because they were non-Irish and were they more or less so than an indigenous Catholic Church which opposed the development of a secular welfare state in Ireland? One short paragraph (on p. 245) in the final chapter manages to include the word 'oppression' on four occasions. In their attempt to introduce a second theme – the oppression by the English – I regret that the editors felt compelled to strike what I consider to be an excessive and unjustified anti-discriminatory pose in an otherwise useful, cogent and complementary set of chapters.

At heart, this is an excellent source book which brings together the legal, administrative, political and professional aspects of social work across the region. It does so very well, particularly through the manner in which it exposes and explains the differences in systems between these (largely) English-speaking neighbours. We learn why, for example, social work with offenders has been 'legislated and organised out of existence' (p. 66) in England yet retained and supported within local authorities in Scotland; why in the Irish Republic the traveller community has its own social work service; how there came to be differences in the arrangements and rights of detained psychiatric patients in Northern Ireland; why in Wales care services for people in later life are a major priority; and why in Guernsey non-stigmatized inter-agency collaboration in services for children and families has developed.

The editors have done a good job of bringing together writers who provide a wide and relevant range of material, clearly and fluently written. This is not, in the words of the authors of one of the chapters, a book of 'dumbing-down blandness' (p. 156) but a coherent collection of essays on the state of the art in social work. There are some particularly engaging sentences. For example, in relation to child protection: 'successive accretions of guidance and circulars from the Department of Health left a rich series of sedimentary layers of policy and structures' (p. 60).

This is I believe a book of two parts. The first is a diligent and useful account of the development of social work across the British Isles. The second is an attempt to use social work as a case study to illustrate oppressive English practice. There are clearly some examples of this but for all the assertions, charts of historical events and repetition of the word 'oppress-

sion? I do not think that a convincing case is made. Nor do I think it needed to be attempted in a book of this kind, which otherwise provides such interesting and useful chapters about what social work was, is and is likely to become across the British Isles.

Clive Sellick

*Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Director of International Studies
University of East Anglia*

The Complete Guide to Sexual Abuse Assessments

Martin C. Calder with Simon Goulding, Helga Hanks, Lynda Regan, Kate Rose, John Skinner and Jayne Wynne

Russell House Publishing, Lyme Regis, 2000, 337 pp.
£29.95. ISBN 1 898924 76 7

Warning bells ring for me when I encounter the adjective 'complete' in the title of textbooks. I ask myself the questions 'Complete as of when? For whom is it complete?' When I read the text, I then begin to search for the gaps. Martin Calder's book would be a challenge to any reader who decided to seek for gaps in *information* about sexual abuse assessments. In this respect, it is a very comprehensive text. However, comprehensiveness is both a strength and a weakness of the book, which aims to be a 'one-stop' text for practitioners, academics and lay people.

In the introductory chapter, Calder locates the book specifically in the England and Wales legislative and social policy framework. He aims to flesh out the skeleton assessment framework provided by the Department of Health (2000) which, he suggests, does not tackle the complexities of sexual abuse assessments. Calder explains that the book will not explore other aspects of context, theory or definitions.

The book has 11 chapters, most of which are single-authored or co-authored by Calder. Five chapters provide frameworks of assessment for children, young people, juveniles and adult men and women who abuse children. Others examine family assessments, mothers of sexually abused children, contact with abusers and self-protection and personal safety skills. There is, then, a wealth of information in this book. However, the provision of such vast amounts of material has its drawbacks.

To begin on a positive note, I found the examination of self-protection and personal safety skills by

Lynda Regan to be the most readable of all the chapters. Regan pays attention to the context and purpose of the work. She provides thoughtful and reflective advice and guidance on the issues of self-protection. Her writing is clear and accessible. Regan is the only author who provides some examination of the issues for children with disabilities and black and minority ethnic children.

The chapter on adult male abusers is one of the more comprehensive ones in the book. The approach taken in this chapter is typical of those chapters which address assessment of family members. Martin Calder and John Skinner suggest that their comprehensive assessment framework for adult male abusers is a 'complete and optimally desirable one' (p. 97). They acknowledge that many practitioners may not be able to undertake all aspects of the assessment and therefore suggest a 'pic n mix' approach (p. 97). There follows a bewildering assortment of checklists, typographies, models, tables, issues to consider, lists and bullet points. There are some very good summaries of research findings amongst the display but these are not analysed with reference to the suggested frameworks. The chapter lacks a coherent focus and structure.

This lack of coherence characterizes the book as a whole. The introductory chapter does not provide a rationale for the structure of the book, nor summaries of following chapters. So, when in the first sentence of Chapter 8, which examines female abusers, Helen Hanks and Jane Wynne refer to the Leeds team of the 1980s, the reader has to scurry back to biographical details of the authors, in order to understand the context.

This text contains a lot of useful material and is a good resource book. However, the shopping metaphors of 'one-stop' and 'pic n mix' used by Calder to describe his approach are very telling. The text is marketed as a supermarket in which the reader, as purchaser, can find everything they need. This suggests that readers can pick and choose from a variety of approaches to find ways which best fit with their personal preferences, resources and work contexts. This could be viewed as a laudably post-modern endeavour. However, the lack of attention to the theoretical assumptions behind the variety of approaches offered gives me cause for concern. Whilst Calder states that the book does not aim to examine theories, all the material within the text is based on theoretical assumptions about sexual abuse. Providing summaries of research alongside checklists and frameworks for action, without exploring the theoretical

bases of the research, denies the reader the crucial analytical tools that they require in order to exercise a choice of approach. To return to the shopping metaphor introduced by Calder, the ingredients of the product are not provided, far less the process of manufacture.

Pam Green Lister

*Department of Social Policy and Social Work
University of Glasgow*

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Myths, Madness and the Family: The Impact of Mental Illness on Families

David W. Jones

Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002. ISBN 0 333 77618 6

I commend this book by David Jones. It offers a number of helpful pathways to the mental health practitioner, in particular in support of what I would call collaborative or co-operative practice with people with a mental illness and their relatives.

The text looks like a PhD in book form. Not always a successful idea but this works. In this review I do not focus on the methodology but rather the findings as helpful pointers to practice.

Jones' view is that whilst the volume of literature linking families and mental health is extensive, few studies shed light on the way mental illness is experienced by family members. By contrast, users of mental health services are the subjects of much attention. Overall, Jones contends that most studies of families are viewed through a highly ideological lens and are constructed in the service of professionals and policy-makers.

Jones sets out to rectify the imbalance and this book develops a number of helpful perspectives from qualitative interviews with some 40 families with a family member with a serious mental illness. According to Jones a number of themes emerge from the study:

- Grief – what he calls a complicated grief, ambivalence, anger, loss, of both past and future.
- Relationship with psychiatry and psychiatric knowledge – Jones highlights here and elsewhere the role relatives have in the diagnostic process, their powerfully expressed need for labels and conventionally

stated diagnosis and prognosis. Thus, those professionals with an increasingly constructionist viewpoint are likely to clash with the relatives' position.

- Jones reports that his interviewees reflected other studies of lay perceptions of mental ill-health. They displayed an eclectic range of understanding, from the genetic, to the biological, to the social. He describes it as a struggle for understanding. Contemporary focus on genetic origins of mental ill-health brings with it feelings of shameful responsibility for what may have been passed on. Overall, an illness model is most adopted, enabling relatives, in the blame process, to externalize blame onto the illness itself.
 - Shame and stigma are discussed within the contemporary paradigm of meaning-making. Jones claims that people's distress is connected to the identifications which exist between people, that people are significant because we experience them as part of ourselves; these are complicated and irrational processes. He sought understanding in this way of the extraordinary commitment relatives showed to their ill family member: 'abandonment of him was an abandonment of part of myself' (p. 114). Commitment could also be buttressed by family myths, the ideal of the family.
 - Other myths – unquestioned premises – are that illness is rooted in troubled sexuality. Indeed the whole notion of sexuality is highlighted by these interviewees as a key factor in the illness; for example, ruptured relationships were seen as signals of being unwell. Relatives were preoccupied with the crossing of sexual boundaries and concerned with sexual exploitation.
 - In managing the stress of it all, Jones points to two enduring messages from the families in his study: (i) the importance of dialogue, especially between relative and professional, and (ii) the need for those listening and engaged in dialogue to understand and allow for the strength of ambivalence. These he claims are crucial in the re-negotiation of new meanings and, ultimately, managing.
- I mentioned collaborative practice above. It involves hard won skills in learning to develop shared meanings. I am reminded of the movement to listen to children, simply said but immensely difficult in shedding mythical, generational and professional notions in order to hear the messages and then to co-operate or collaborate in practice. This book doesn't address all of that, but analyses and represents, straightforwardly, important views of relatives. It is a well-organized book with a helpful, critical literature. It enables the

reader to extract its useful messages without too much difficulty.

Chris Warren-Adamson
University of Southampton

A Guide to Interviewing Children: Essential Skills for Counsellors, Police, Lawyers and Social Workers

Clare Wilson and Martine Powell

Routledge, London and New York, 2001, 136 pp. £15.99.
ISBN 0 415 25250 4

The containment of any further trauma resulting from child sexual abuse within disclosure interviews has long been recognized as a complex area of professional practice, where lack of skills and training can impact on obtaining good evidence, distorted or contaminated by insensitive or over-zealous interviewing. At worst, this may result in system abuse. In local practice, there is often a shortage of expertise and consequently an over-reliance on well-intentioned but under-trained interviewers. The guidance offered through the UK's *Memorandum of Good Practice on Video Recorded Interviews with Child Witnesses for Criminal Proceedings* (Home Office/Department of Health 1992) has gone some way to addressing this deficit.

This book builds on such protocols and sets out to instruct and inform practice by laying down some tenets and principles which may guide a range of professionals. This is achieved by discussing the child disclosure process in depth, providing knowledge and reviewing interviewing techniques. It is argued that these can be adapted to different circumstances, but this book focuses specifically on the accurate assessment of alleged sexual abuse or obtaining legal evidence, rather than discussing skills involved in therapeutic interviewing.

This publication usefully bridges the gap between theory and practice, indicating *in detail* how to *actually conduct an interview* in a comprehensive manner, following key stages in the process including working with parents. Included in the five chapters are preparation and planning, interviewing methods, and suggested approaches to difficulties which might be encountered due to age, racial or cultural identity, learning disability, fear, or deception. Ethical issues are also addressed such as consent, suggestibility or multiple interviewing. Professionals are cautioned against making adult assumptions, asking inappropri-

ate questions or drawing stereotypical conclusions about refusal or unusual behaviour encountered from child victims. The neglected area of interview closure, as well as evaluation and outcomes, are also addressed in the final chapter.

The Australian authors (who are research based clinical psychologists), echoing other writers on the topic of childhood trauma (Kroll 1998), base their knowledge upon well-founded theoretical premises which include assumptions that interviewing techniques are learned skills rather than just common-sense, requiring an appropriate understanding of the 'courageous' child victims' view of the world. Thus a child-centred sensitivity is paramount, involving complex listening skills (using verbal and non-verbal cues), going at the child's pace and considering the child's needs (Bannister *et al.* 1990). Emphasis is placed on the disclosure situation being founded upon a trusting, non-judgmental relationship in which knowledge of stages of child development is crucial, indicated by a child's sense of chronology and identity, as well as relevant sexual knowledge. These aspects must be carefully listened to and assessed with awareness of adult pre-suppositions. Worthy of special mention are Chapters 1 and 4, in which childhood memory and recall is explored as well as language, competency, veracity and concepts of secrecy: in the latter, issues of diversity are examined including ethnicity and disability, particularly pertinent where high levels of risk or vulnerability are indicated amongst this group of children.

Although modest claims are made about this book as a 'quick reference' tool or as a companion to training packages, it is clearly based on current research evidence and reviewed protocols and policy documents, thus giving it some substance. Research references have been fully incorporated into the text along with a bibliography, appendices, tables, exercises and case material, making it a useful starting point for professionals such as the police, social workers with statutory duties, and workers in the criminal justice system or allied child welfare agencies with differing levels of knowledge and expertise. It is written in a fresh, easily readable style that conveys wisdom about children's thinking, applicable globally.

The authors claim that such interviewing techniques can be generalized to other styles of interview, for example with victims of bullying, but child sexual abuse disclosure was selected as the most challenging and sensitive topic. I would argue further that for professionals, the nature of a child disclosure interview may also be qualitatively different, more distasteful,

distressing or contaminating, specifically when multiple abuse or multiple victims are identified or young children are concerned (Cleaver & Freeman 1996). From my own research and knowledge of joint police/social services criminal investigations, I felt this aspect was somewhat skimmed over, although there was some allusion to it (pp. 87–88, 91). The commentary would also have benefited from a clearer delineation between criminal child witness interviewing techniques and those used for the purposes of psychological assessment of suspected abuse allegations. There was a tendency to collapse these differing purposes together, rather than draw out substantive distinctions which might arise from differing agendas.

Despite these reservations, this book will prove an invaluable and detailed guide through a complex process, fraught with challenges and pitfalls when gathering quality information, and is thus recom-

mended reading for professionals engaged in the field.

Pam Freeman

*Department of Social Work and Probation Studies
University of Exeter*

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Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, romantic partners, or strangers. Globally, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year (1). Experiencing violence in childhood impacts lifelong health and well-being. Target 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to “end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of, children”. Evidence from Ferguson, H. (1997) “Protecting children in new times: Child protection and the risk society”, *Child and Family Social Work*, 2, 221–234. CrossRef Google Scholar. Gillingham, P. (2006) “Risk assessment in child protection: Problem rather than solution?”, *Australian Social Work*, 59 (1), 86–98. CrossRef Google Scholar. Goddard, C. & Liddell, M. (1995) “Child abuse fatalities and the media: Lessons from a case study”, *Child Abuse Review*, 4, 356–364. CrossRef Google Scholar. Stanley, J. & Goddard, C. (2002) *In the firing line: Violence and power in child protection work*, Chichester: Wiley. Google Scholar. Thompson, N. (2005) *Understanding social work: Preparing for practice*, 2nd Edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Google Scholar. Children and Workers in the Firing Line: Messages from the Case Files and Interviews. The Shifting Foundations of Child Protection: The Context of the Victorian Study. The Failure to Protect: Child Deaths due to Familial Assault or Neglect. The Failure to Protect: Repeated Abuse. The Social Worker-Client Relationship: From Love to Violence and Beyond. Protective Workers in the Firing Line: The True Extent of Violence and Isolation. Hostage Theory. Child Protection Workers as Hostages. Beyond the Firing Line: A Broad Perspective. Supervision: From Part of the Problem to Part of the Solution. Th... In the Firing Line. Based on interviews with protective workers and rigorous examination of their cases, this ground breaking book draws links between the traumatised and isolated child protection worker and the traumatised and isolated re-abused child. Read full description. See details and exclusions - In the Firing Line, Janet Stanley, Paperback. See all 6 brand new listings. Buy it now. Significant numbers of social workers practise in child wellbeing and protection settings in a range of roles including direct case work, management and policy. No other professional discipline is so immersed in the areas of knowledge that are essential for quality relationship-based child protection practice. As a result, social workers are recognised throughout the world as the core professional group in child protection policy, management and practice.