

perhaps compulsion to enter it, and with luck, to illuminate it, and to bring something back to the light”.

Part 3 - “Writing on-line” - is about e-therapy, ‘the therapeutic relationship in typed text’, and has chapters about on-line therapy, staff counselling, the use of e-mail by the Samaritans and, given the burgeoning nature of this field, a timely chapter on practical and ethical considerations for such work. Part 4 - “Reflective practice” - is another strong section, documenting ideas about writing as a vehicle for supervision and therapist reflection on which journals, letters, free-writing, poetry, therapy-note-keeping and writing-in-groups are all included. Reflective practice is considered from both the perspective of therapist well-being as well as therapy quality and the idea of writing as one way of processing difficult and affecting material is well developed.

Perhaps, unsurprisingly, given all its authors are wordsmiths, this book is very well written. Several chapters are outstanding here - Wright’s review of the field (ch. 1), Anthony Ryle’s chapter on the importance of writing in CAT (ch. 6), the chapter by Bolton and Latham on poetry (ch.10) and Heller’s chapter on writing in a reflexive practice group of staff working with people with dementia (ch. 21). One or two chapters are less well-written, the least elegant for me being that on Narrative Therapy. (I should perhaps confess here to generally finding papers on Narrative Therapy hard work and this one I’m afraid was no exception). I also found Steinberg’s chapter on Archetypes a little over-crafted and self-conscious but these are perhaps criticisms on the grounds of style rather than content. Both chapters contained important ideas and I would not have left them out.

I recommend *Writing Cures* to anyone wanting to extend their repertoire of possibilities for clients, as it is an eminently practical book. I recommend it too to anyone thoughtful about words, about language and meaning, as it is also a book about therapy as a philosophical endeavour. I liked it very much.

Dr. Jenny Corless

Forgiveness and the Healing Process

A Central Therapeutic Concern

Cynthia Ransley and Terri Spy (Eds). (2004). East Sussex: Brunner – Routledge.

This nine chapter book on ‘therapeutic forgiveness’ is beautifully researched to answer a mind-bugging question- could there be a missing link in psychological treatment or counselling in meeting client’s needs in some settings? The text is designed to help professionals, clients and

colleagues cope with trauma and injustice through forgiveness, either as victims or victimizers, and to move on with life. People who are not able to experience forgiveness are likely to experience a range of emotions, including anger, resentment, hatred and revenge, of feeling used, degraded or demeaned. The book was written in response to a client's request to have 'forgiveness' listed as a goal in therapy- she wanted to forgive her parents for her childhood abuse.

In conceptualising the theme of forgiveness, the authors explore pioneers such as Jean Piaget and Sigmund Freud, which adds to the scientific credibility of the book. The text indicates that research evidence, largely in the U.S.A., has linked forgiveness to good mental health and possibly good physical health of clients. Some people have been hurt from rape, fraud, insult, childhood neglect, sexual or physical abuse, injustice at work and other forms of injuries. These persons may need therapeutic support to connect with their religious beliefs or personal philosophy in order to be able to 'let go of the hurt' and forgive themselves and others. Forgiveness is a prelude to 'real' reconciliation and a core component in trauma psychotherapy.

The text discusses several specific clinical models and generic principles to guide the forgiveness process. The models portray forgiveness as a process requiring change in motivational state, affect, cognition and possibly in behaviour. It is useful to understand the personality (e.g. anxious or narcissistic) of a child or an adult and his/her perception of 'what is right and what is wrong or how it feels to be wronged'. The book explores interactive work with couples, suggesting that forgiveness in relationships requires both parties in actively seeking and welcoming forgiveness and exploring the depths of hurt experienced. Professionals helping others to process forgiveness may explore the reconstruction of meaning behind shattered assumptions about existential truths, negotiating new life choices and developing a sense of new personal identity.

The authors explore the 'process model' of forgiveness in mediation work as a key to healing fractured interpersonal relationships in organisations, among colleagues and between therapists and clients. It is a fact that 'unforgiven hurt feelings' and a cycle of emotional conflict can slow job performance, lead to job termination or compensatory litigation. The psychological consequences of hatred or resentment is self-destructive for both the victim and the victimiser to the extent of affecting workforce development, family and community life. The text further explores restorative forgiveness in the criminal justice system and a framework for dealing with 'aftermath of political trauma'.

The authors are able to bring together their diverse personal, research, theoretical and clinical experiences to develop this text. They demonstrated professional competence by clearly appreciating their roles as clinicians and ensuring that they did not stray into territory more expertly covered by

philosophers or theologians. Perhaps one weakness of the text, which indeed may be a strength for some readers, is a certain 'over emotionalisation' of some of the self-narratives of unpleasant encounter with 'forgiveness'. That said the book is a wake up call to psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, counsellors, victim support workers/mediators, social workers, other mental health workers and service managers. There could be no better awakening than to read a copy of this interesting book.

Benaliligha F. Selema

Depression

The Way Out of Your Prison.

Dorothy Rowe. (2003). 3rd Edition. Hove: Brunner-Routledge.

This book was first published in 1983 and is now in its third edition. The first 150 pages describe the experience of depression and how it develops. Rowe's key point is that depression is not an illness or a mental disorder but a defence against pain and fear. Whenever we experience a life event that shatters our ideas about our lives, the world and ourselves and leaves us fearful, we can use depression as a defence. If in looking for an explanation as to why a disaster happened we conclude it happened by chance or because of someone else's stupidity then we will feel more afraid and helpless to prevent further bad things happening. If, however, we blame ourselves, then we take responsibility and control. In accepting that the disaster is our fault then suddenly everything makes sense and we feel safe in our prison of depression where we hate ourselves, cut ourselves off from others (if they see how wicked we are they will punish us) and from our own past and future. Depression therefore gives life meaning. Being depressed is a safe place to be, every day is the same and we can be sure what will happen, we grow accustomed to its predictability.

According to Rowe, our sense of being a person comes from our structure of meanings (i.e. our guesses/theories about what is going on). When our guesses approximate what is actually going on we feel all right but when our guesses go badly wrong we feel shaky and frightened that we may be annihilated as a person. We constantly try to maintain our sense of existence and ward off threats of annihilation.

Rowe believes that people tend to see themselves as existing in one of two ways. Firstly, as existing in relation to others and therefore the threat of annihilation comes from feeling rejected. Secondly, as existing in terms of our own development and achievement and thus the threat of annihilation comes from a sense of losing control. Thus the core concept of depression is the discovery that there is a serious discrepancy between