

partnership with a user-led training organisation. It gave me lots of ideas and I could immediately think of people who would get a lot from it – especially given the problems many organisations seem to have in trying to do anything remotely survivor led.

The book continues with the stories of other such projects, user led or heavily involving users – and a very pertinent chapter by trainers Allan Forman and Alan Pringle on what it is like to be brought on as ‘the visual aid’. Part two covers key topics in mental health education, such as how to facilitate learning about values, promoting cultural capability, and a thought-provoking chapter on how drug companies are using money to influence training. Part three looks at specific approaches to teaching such as using drama and information technology.

Some of the contributors do bring in a lot of educational theory, resulting in some dense text and considerable amounts of jargon. However the hard stuff is balanced by the chapters that are written straight from the heart. There are some that I will read several times because they have such a lot to say.

The book ends with a challenge – how do we make sure that we teach from a strong, person-centred value base and do not just turn out more of the same type of worker that has gone before? Having read the book, I felt more confident about doing things differently and more motivated to continue to fight against complacency and to try not to simply produce another brick for the wall.

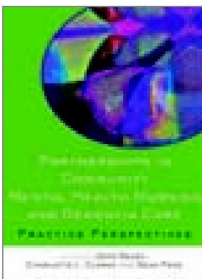
Sharon Lee Cuthbert

PARTNERSHIPS IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH NURSING AND DEMENTIA CARE  
Practical perspectives

John Keady, Charlotte L Clarke, Sean Page (eds)

Open University Press, 2007 344pp £24.99 ISBN 978 0 335215 81 2

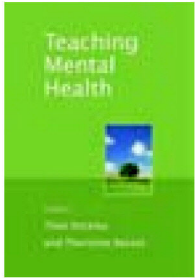
This comprehensive (and very heavy) book is a companion volume to Community Mental Health Nursing and Dementia Care: Practice Perspectives, published in 2003. It aims to fill some of the gaps in the earlier book, adding material on a number of socially



excluded groups, and updating both the context and the realities of contemporary community mental health nursing practice.

The book has three sections: models of community support and practice; professional roles and clinical work, and changing and developing community mental health nursing practice. It is slightly surprising that the chapter on ethnic minority communities and dementia was written for the first section, with more emphasis on policy and context than on practice. Interesting though it is, it leaves a gap.

The middle section may be the most interesting for practitioners. It includes a particularly useful chapter on



social exclusion and the experience of dementia. This includes discussion of homelessness, being in prison and being an older asylum seeker in relation to dementia. The chapter on the community mental health nurse in the care home sector is a valuable summary of dementia care mapping, with helpful case examples.

The book also includes material on service user involvement in care pathways. The user and carer perspective is also enhanced by a chapter on designing support services that is co-written by a service user and a carer with their community mental health nurse – a collaborative approach that other books on mental health would do well to emulate.

Overall, this book is useful. It is well-indexed and has helpful summaries and sections on lessons for practice. It is to be hoped that the title will not deter clinicians other than nurses from reading it, as it will be of interest and of use to them too.

Ros Levenson

ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHIATRY

Tim Thornton

Oxford University Press, 2007 267pp £19.95 ISBN 978 0199228 71 3

This is the latest volume in Oxford University Press’s hugely successful International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry series.

The book is divided into three parts, each of two chapters: ‘Values’, ‘Meanings’, and ‘Facts’. Anti-psychiatry, clinical decision-making, classification and the nature of disorder, and cognitivism are just some of the important topics lucidly discussed. Thornton argues for a ‘relaxed naturalism’, where some of the most interesting properties in the world, and in mental health, such as value and meaning are irreducible but are none the less real for that. As with Weber and McDowell, an enriched re-enchanted conception of nature is called for where the basic unit of meaning is the whole person. Thornton bravely concludes his excellent book with some predictions for the future of the field.

The philosophy of psychiatry has established itself incrementally within the last 15 years, as academic appointments, conferences, courses and publications have flourished in response to the demand from journals, academic institutions, health services and policy makers for conceptual work in mental health. This book serves as a clear and relatively brief overview of the main debates in the area, and is written by an authoritative teacher and researcher in the field. However, it would be unfair to describe this volume solely as a textbook; in addition to fulfilling that function, Thornton offers his own views on the central problems in thinking about mental health and disorder. As such, it is a persuasive, well argued, and original contribution to the field in its own right, and no mere primer. This book is truly essential to all those who work, study and research in mental health, as well as those who suffer from mental illness and their family and friends.

Matthew Broome

‘... truly essential to all those who work, study and research in mental health’

