

Therapeutic Practice in Schools (Vol. 2). The Contemporary Adolescent: A clinical workbook for counsellors, psychotherapists and arts therapists, edited by Lyn French and Reva Klein. London, Routledge, 2015, 206pp., £100 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-415-85816-8; £28.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-415-85821-2.

In an earlier volume of this Journal, I favourably reviewed French and Klein's *Therapeutic Practice in Schools: Working with the Child Within* (Best, 2014), and I looked forward to the second volume with interest. I was not disappointed.

Like Volume 1, *The Contemporary Adolescent* does not set out to be of great theoretical depth - although it is clearly informed by a thorough grasp of relevant theories of psycho-analysis and adolescent development - but rather, to be a "practical handbook for school-based counsellors, psychotherapists, arts therapists and play therapists" (p.1). And it is certainly practical: there are throughout vignettes, case-studies, discussion questions and suggested forms of words by which the therapist may better engage the client whose 'here and now' is that of the challenges of adolescent development, and the contributors generally manage to keep the significance of the school setting in focus.

The book is in three parts: Part 1 The Context; Part 2 Common Themes; Part 3 Using Creative Approaches and Applied Therapies.

The first two chapters of Part 1 provide some essential theoretical and conceptual groundwork for what follows. Sue Kegerreis identifies the (internal and external) pressures on contemporary adolescents, the variety of ways in which they react to and defend against these pressures, and how this manifests itself in the therapy room, while Jenny Dover employs some excellent case-studies in a comprehensive but succinct treatment of the impact of early attachment patterns on adolescent development.

Chapter 3 (by Norma Gould) is a case -study of an academy which has adopted a whole-school approach to emotional support, and the way in which the role of the therapist is 'embedded' across the organization. The diverse ways by which emotional well-being may be enhanced - for staff as well as students - are well-described, as are some of the limitations and complexities of the system, including role-conflict, issues of confidentiality and the need for adequate supervision. Some of these complexities are revisited with insight and sensitivity, by Lyn French and Sue Lund in Chapter 5, which looks specifically at how the therapy needs to be shaped and adapted to the needs of the adolescent in the secondary school setting. I thought the study questions/vignettes and the sample responses at the end of this chapter were particularly good.

Chapter 6 (by Angie Doran and Lyn French) on beginnings and endings in school-based therapy made me ponder my tendency to react negatively to using questionnaires in assessment and client review, while Reva Klein's shortish chapter 4 on social media made me think more deeply about this aspect of contemporary life for the adolescent and its impact for the therapist.

All but one of the eleven chapters in Part 2 deal with issues or aspects of adolescent behaviour and experience which are recurrent themes for therapists working with mainstream students in schools: Stefania Putzu-Williams on anger; Lyn French on self-harm; Jo Evans on bereavement; Akin Ojumu on exclusion; Myra Berg on authority figures; Lyn French on relationships, sex and sexuality; Reva Klein on difference; Margery Craig on bullying; David Trevatt on peer-groups and gangs; and Melissa Jones on transition from primary school. The odd one out in this section (but no less important for that), is Tamsin Cottis's chapter 16 which deals with the rather more specialist question of working with children on the Autistic spectrum.

I will not try to summarize each of these chapters, but some features are worth noting: the role of the therapist in 'holding' or containing the powerful feelings - anger, grief, shame, embarrassment, guilt - brought to the therapy room by the bereaved, the bullied, the excluded, the intimidated and the ostracised, and the force of the projections and transference soaked up by the therapist; Klein's powerful case for a more nuanced concept of difference which goes beyond challenging the usual assumptions based on race, class, religion etc; and the added dimensions to bullying in the 'digital age'. As a sociologist, I should have liked to see a little more analysis of group cultures in Trevatt's chapter, but all the chapters in this section are well-done, and, as elsewhere, there are telling case-studies, suggestions for practice, and probing study questions throughout.

I am not so happy with the third and final Part, however. There are just two chapters on creative approaches - Tara Richards on dramatherapy techniques and Lyn French on practices informed by art therapy - and one on adopting a systemic framework (by Camilla Waldburg). There are some good ideas in these chapters, but there are weaknesses. In Chapter 18, I am not clear why some of the techniques (such as the practice of 'checking-in', using an 'emotions chart', 'life-mapping' and making a 'spectogram') are attributed to dramatherapy as they seem more generic than that. Those looking for more active/dramatic techniques for use with clients will be disappointed to find just two paragraphs about role play. Though Waldburg's chapter is informative about the systemic framework for family-therapy, I am surprised that its application to systems to which the adolescents belong *in schools* (explicit and implied in other places in the book), is neglected. I am reminded of the 1970s concept of the form or tutor-group as a small, caring community, and how in some schools, forms were comprised of pupils from across all years in what was called 'family grouping'. Not to explore how the systemic perspective might be applied in such contexts seems to me to be an opportunity missed.

That said, this is a good book: clearly written, theoretically sound and of generally uniform quality. It would make a valuable resource for initial training or CPD work for counsellors and therapists working in secondary schools. It happily stands alone, but would gain much from being read in conjunction with the earlier volume, for the application of the theory and practice of Volume 1 specifically to work with adolescents in Volume 2 enriches one's understanding of both.

While form tutors and subject teachers are not explicitly amongst the target readership, this book has much to offer them by way of insight into the work of the school therapist and their own support work with troubled pupils. There is much here, too, for those in management and leadership roles to consider, not least the problem of role-conflict, issues of information sharing and confidentiality, and the need for all staff to be fully informed about the aims and practices of school therapists.

Reference

Best, R (2014). Review of 'Therapeutic practice in schools. Working with the child within: a clinical workbook for counsellors, psychotherapists and arts therapists', edited by Lyn French and Reva Klein. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 32(3), 233-238.

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