



BOOK REVIEWS

If you would like to review a book for *The Psychologist*, contact Mike Thompson on michth@bps.org.uk. Publishers should send advance title information and books for possible review to *The Psychologist* at the Leicester address.

Putting children in the picture

COX effortlessly navigates a large body of work to provide a lavishly illustrated, beautifully written coherent contemporary account of the study of children's pictorial representation.

The early chapters are concerned with what children understand about art and pictorial representation and how they might represent the world. This turns into a discussion about children's drawings as an indicator of developmental progression: do children's drawings mirror development, and if so what do they tell us?

Cox takes these issues further by considering the



The Pictorial World of the Child

MAUREEN COX

CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005;

Pb £24.99 (ISBN 0 521 53198 5)

REVIEWED BY **Andrew Dunn**

development of art across time, the role of culture, and the nature of artistic representation in special populations (including the blind). She also questions the sometimes vainglorious, often naive, assumptions made about children's drawings by both clinical practitioners and novices. Finally, she examines the role of art in educational

curricula evaluating different approaches to art teaching, highlighting its importance for both intellectual and social development.

The message of this book is that studying artistic representation in children can provide useful and valid insights into cognitive, perceptual and emotional development. However, it is far

from straightforward, and it is as easy to overestimate as to underestimate the significance of children's drawings. Cox has visited some of these issues before and, as she acknowledges, has been selective in what she presents. Nevertheless this updated account is both engaging and informative – a rich overview of the research. Whether you are a researcher, student or interested browser, you should definitely buy (or at least borrow) this book.

■ *Andrew Dunn is a senior lecturer at Nottingham Trent University.*

A POWERFUL ARGUMENT

Delivering Evidence-based Therapeutic Support to Children and Families: Messages from an Interagency Team Working with Families Affected by Abuse

ANN CATCHPOLE (Ed.)

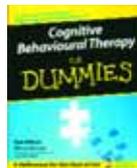
LYME REGIS: RUSSELL HOUSE; 2006; Pb £22.95 (ISBN 1 903855 85 3)

REVIEWED BY **Michael Stoker**

THIS respectful book provides a thorough description of the evolution and current practice of JACAT, an inter-agency team that has been working with children and families affected by sexual abuse for the past 17 years. The book succeeds in its stated aim of '[giving] less experienced therapists working in this difficult field the confidence to work out their own ways of therapeutic intervention'. Chapters on the consultation process, working with individuals, group work, and family therapy are illustrated by numerous case studies and reflective commentary. Refreshingly, the potential impact of such work on professionals is acknowledged, along with formal procedures for minimising this and preventing possible 'burnout'. Although the evidence base referred to in the title could have been dealt with in greater depth, the book nevertheless presents a powerful argument for the far wider provision of such services. I recommend it to all working with the sequelae of abuse.

■ *Michael Stoker is a clinical psychologist working for the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Trust.*

Worth a dip



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Dummies

ROB WILSON & RHENA BRANCH

CHICHESTER: WILEY; 2006; Pb £14.99 (ISBN 0 470 01838 0)

REVIEWED BY **Audrey Espie**

IN keeping with the 'Dummies' ethos, this book tackles a difficult subject in a lively but helpful way. I decided to 'pitch up' (as the authors would say), look beyond the title and its effects on my self-esteem and read on, and I'm glad I did. I discovered a plethora of information that any CBT therapists could draw on for a quick and easy resource. Not only do the authors acknowledge significant practitioners in the CBT field, but they appear to have read all the text!

While working to the Dummies spec of plain English, they still manage to include the jargon, in a lighthearted and sometimes colloquial manner. I think the key to getting the

most from this book, is to dip in and out. The modular format lends itself very well to this approach and the sidebars and icons draw the eye to important and summary material, e.g. chapter 14/15 information on core beliefs was helpful for a specific patient.

Although I was somewhat puzzled by the inclusion of a section on aromatherapy, I think clinicians could find useful sections in this book, although I would stop short of asking a patient to read all.

Tip – if you're going to read it on the train, get a cover!

■ *Dr Audrey Espie is a clinical psychologist in adult mental health in Johnstone, Scotland.*

Ask, and it shall be revealed

BY asking two thousand 7- to 15-year-old children a range of questions on topics such as what influences them and how much responsibility they feel they should have this book gives an interesting flavour of what its like to be a child in the 21st century. It also asks similar questions of 500 adults, giving the results at the end of each chapter and drawing comparisons.

Taking a broadly social-constructionist approach and examining numerous areas that exert influence on children there is a comprehensive coverage of relevant literature backed up by findings from the author's current study. Each area addressed is set in its historical context, which assists in the presentation of how views have changed over the years and the different pressures that today's children face. It also emphasises that the concept and meaning of childhood is constantly changing, and that what we expect of children, their behaviour, and the levels of responsibility granted should correspondingly alter.

Clear charts and tables summarising the results of the study make this book easy to digest for those of us who are put off by complicated statistical analyses. However, in some areas the findings are not surprising; for example, a large percentage

Children These Days

NICOLA MADGE

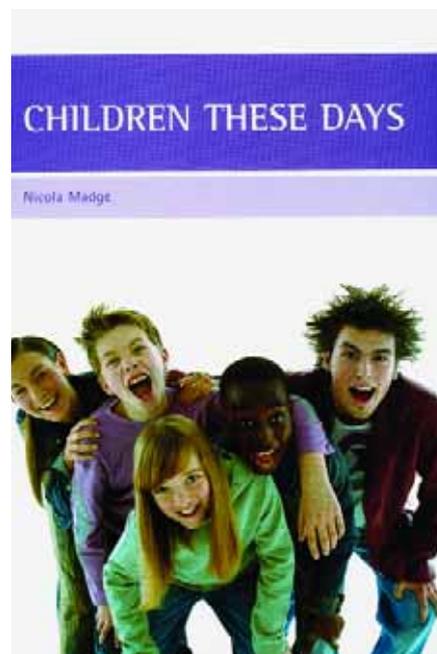
BRISTOL: POLICY PRESS; 2006; Pb £17.99 (ISBN 1 86134 783 9)

REVIEWED BY **Amy Mckee**

of children apparently don't like exams or homework! On some occasions I felt further exploration of some of the results was warranted, and in that respect the book perhaps gives useful pointers for future research.

The book provides some thoughts on the direction of service delivery and some useful summaries of the challenges faced by services in meeting the needs of children. I don't think it goes far enough though, as it does not provide many practical suggestions and leaves you thinking that although identification of need is useful some solid suggestions of how to implement change would be more helpful.

Overall, the book provides a useful synopsis of recent literature in many different aspects of childhood. As a resource for those wishing to understand the motivations of children, what interests, upsets and frustrates them, this book provides some helpful information.

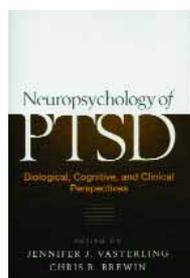


And the key to discovering what matters to children these days? Ask them.

■ *Amy Mckee is a trainee clinical psychologist on the Staffordshire and Shropshire course.*

Four perspectives on PTSD

THIS book brings together expert contributions on what is known about the neuropsychology of PTSD, aiming for a wide audience. Overall, the book provides a well-referenced overview of current research findings relating to the three areas indicated in the title. Extensive reviews of neurobiological findings in PTSD and a shorter section on cognitive information processing and memory paradigms set the scene. Four different population perspectives follow (early trauma; adults; ageing trauma survivors; and traumatic brain injury) – which are interesting



Neuropsychology of PTSD: Biological, Cognitive and Clinical Perspectives

JENNIFER VASTERLING & CHRIS BREWIN (Eds.)

NEW YORK: GUILFORD PRESS; 2005; Hb £34.50 (ISBN 1 59385 173 1)

REVIEWED BY **Carolyn J. Choudhary**

and draw on previous chapters, but not always explicitly.

Finally, clinical implications of the knowledge captured in the rest of the book are considered.

While the book is accessible and interesting, the reader is often left to make the links between chapters, and more could be made of some of the

issues that emerge, such as whether impaired memory is more to do with impairments of the hippocampus or prefrontal cortex. This could have been remedied by a longer preface that reviewed the contributions of each of the chapters and outlined the developing themes, rather than only briefly

outlining the four sections.

The first chapter, as an introduction, was a strange mixture. The attempt at a historical overview was patchy (Kraepelin referenced but no mention of Pierre Janet?), as was the treatment of epidemiology (barely a mention of sex differences in prevalence of PTSD); however, the section on methodological issues was excellent. Despite these shortcomings this is a valuable text, containing a wealth of information.

■ *Carolyn J. Choudhary is a PhD student at the University of Stirling.*