

particular aspect of personal and professional life, this book is a flagship. For those who would like to know more about the various ways people respond to their religious upbringing, it is a powerful and valuable resource.

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## Seeing and saying

**Destructive myths in family therapy: how to overcome barriers to communication by seeing and saying – a humanistic perspective**

Daniela Kramer-Moore and Michael Moore  
Wiley-Blackwell 2012, £27.99  
ISBN 978-0470667002  
*Reviewed by James Costello*



Although the title might suggest a relatively narrow target audience of family therapists, I feel certain that the fascinating ideas addressed here, coupled with the accessible style, would also speak to the experienced therapist, the trainee and the lay reader alike. By focusing on what is actually said in spousal, sibling and parental relationships, the authors invite the reader to reflect on the powerful and often destructive myths, narratives, schemas – call them what you will – that underpin family systems.

The authors go on to illustrate how these narratives may shape and characterise

our engagement with wider systems such as culture and ethnicity – although the role of social class seems an obvious omission to me. The approach reminds me of Berne's *Games People Play*, which throws light on the unseen and often unhealthy interpersonal dynamics and psychological agendas in which we engage and to which we are subjected.

The authors are scholarly in their approach, drawing on a broad range of stimulating sources to illustrate their arguments, including popular culture, social psychology, game theory and humanistic, systemic, existential and psychodynamic traditions. Their humanistic perspective derives from a belief that a lack of authenticity is likely to underpin many family problems.

Part 1 of the book focuses on both therapists and clients developing their awareness of (or seeing) familial blind spots. Time is also spent examining the particular challenges encountered by family therapists. Each subsection is supported by a variety of exercises for use with family groups or for an individual's personal development.

Part 2 examines the implications of what is 'said'. In Chapter 5, for example, messages that serve to block change and promote homeostasis are unpicked: a typical example being 'Better the devil you know', with its hidden message of despair and helplessness.

One quibble is the use of the word 'sanitogenic', which in future editions might be more simply expressed as 'healthy'. *James Costello is a senior lecturer and BACP accredited counsellor*

## Sanity in selfhood

**Selfhood: a key to the recovery of emotional wellbeing, mental health and the prevention of mental health problems**

Terry Lynch  
Mental Health Publishing  
2011, £15.99  
ISBN 978-1908561008  
*Reviewed by Rosalind Hewitt*



Experience of working with individuals with mental health problems categorised as severe, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, has convinced the author, a GP and a psychotherapist, that much mental illness can be prevented and well-being improved by developing a 'high sense of selfhood'.

Selfhood involves feeling 'safe, in control, empowered, self-centred and self-confident' (p3). It is not dissimilar to Rogers' concept of becoming true to one's 'authentic self'.

Lynch, who has established a recovery-focused mental health service in Ireland, doesn't reference the many psychotherapeutic models and theories on which he appears to draw to advance his ideas. But then this is a self-help book, not an academic text. It is the first in a planned series to promote emotional wellbeing and is written for individuals to study, ideally between 30 minutes to an hour a day, and to put into practice. Section one sets out the basic principles of selfhood.

Section two advises how, through action, reflecting and revisiting, writing and affirmations, the level of selfhood can be raised. There are sections on 'Spatial aspects of selfhood', such as boundaries and personal space, on 'Self-awareness', 'Caring for yourself', 'Attitudes toward yourself' and 'Self-efficacy'. Instructions and suggestions are interspersed with anecdotes about the various ways in which selfhood is lost and can be recovered. The tone is a mixture of the prescriptive and avuncular.

The absence of explicit theoretical models and – always useful – research references would exclude this from a trainee counsellor's essential reading list, but it may be helpful to people who are either unable or reluctant to embark on therapy. *Rosalind Hewitt is a psychotherapist and supervisor*

## Relationship matters

**Therapist and client: a relational approach to psychotherapy**

Patrick Nolan  
Wiley-Blackwell 2012, £29.99  
ISBN 978-0470019535  
*Reviewed by Angela Cooper*



Nolan's aim in this book is to show how the therapeutic relationship matters more than theoretical orientation or particular techniques. In support of this argument, the opening chapter draws on findings from infant