

an employer to go in enabling an ill person, in this case mentally ill, to be a productive employee.

This book is about and for all of us. Mental health staff is far from being free of stigmatic beliefs, and dealing with these issues should begin at home, inviting people with mental illness to speak to staff about their lives, their struggles and their achievements, to understand that we all dream and we all have the right to attempt to approach their fulfillment.

I was left wondering whether some of the goals have a broader agenda that are not appropriate to all cultures. They advise using a “Freedom in society” scale that includes four statements for evaluation. Statement two is: A chance to pursue your dreams is: not important – important – very important, while Statement four is: Respect and admiration for your accomplishments is: not important – important – very important. I wonder whether these values are very Western and less suited to more traditional societies. When I measured my own values, it seems I have more stigmatic beliefs about freedom in society than about freedom and mental illness!

The reference to side-effects of anti-psychotics seems outdated, discussing “nasty” tremor, with no initial mention of obesity and diabetes, although this is corrected in a later chapter. The book has a significant number of typos, most minor, some substantial: the most unfortunate is that the terms odd and even are reversed in the instructions for evaluating two scales: public versus self stigma in the self stigma assessment scale on pages 120-121 and empowerment of one’s self versus one’s community in the personal empowerment self-assessment scale on page 136. Others are trivial but jar on this reader: we learn that stigma busting letters should contain relevant facts, and not be anonymous. The example on page 108 refers to 8-10% of British people having serious mental illness, but the letter is addressed Illinois. In the exercise of cognitive restructuring on pages 123-4, the person first identifies a distressing feeling, and then the associated thought. In the table, these are erroneously reversed.

To the publisher: this book is not a long read and purposely compact for a wide non-academic audience. The recommended price of £60 (\$97, or 330 IS) will ensure it is a collector’s item.

These limitations, notwithstanding, Corrigan, Roe and Tsang have given us a wonderful enriching read, essential for all the mental health professions and those working to improve the lives of people with serious mental illness.

And finally, if you haven’t seen it yet – and I hadn’t before I read the book – type into Google “Change a mind about mental illness,” and click on the youtube.

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Mental Health, Psychotherapy and Judaism

Seymour Hoffman, 2011, Golden Sky Books, 127 pages. \$15:45

This slim volume is a potpourri of articles, on the interface of psychotherapy and Judaism. Nine of the ten articles were penned by the author and the last article is a reprint of an article that previously appeared in the Israel Journal of Psychiatry. The articles range from heavy, scholarly to light and entertaining. The book is the fourth (and the first in English) of a series sponsored by Nefesh Israel, “an organization of observant clinicians which recognizes the advantages of pulling together with men of the spirit, pooling resources and giving scope for members of both fields to cooperate, enrich each other, even while recognizing the differences in their orientation, purpose and methods.” The book is dedicated to Dr. Judith Guedalia, the co-founder and co-chairperson of the organization that was founded over a decade ago.

The topics considered in this book are varied and relate to theoretical as well as practical issues. Thus for example, one can find in this book reports of effective therapeutic treatments involving rabbis and psychologists, markedly differing opinions of various rabbinic authorities regarding psychotherapy, detailed rich clinical case material illustrating treatment issues that have relevance in terms of Jewish law, treatment dilemmas arising from conflicts between Jewish law and aspects of psychotherapy as generally practiced, a report of the functioning of the first mental health clinic under haredi auspices, as well as entertaining and illuminating anecdotes of the strategic interventions of prominent rabbis, ancient and modern, in their attempts to aid people suffering from emotional and psychological stress and conflicts, and in effecting change in people. The article by Greenberg and Shefler is of special interest as it clearly depicts the psychological insights and sophistication of two highly revered haredi rabbis’ insights into the psychopathology and treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder of the religious type.

In reference to the latter points mentioned, the reader can begin to feel confused on the position of the author regarding the rabbi’s role in the therapeutic enterprise.

Should the rabbi always or sometimes take on the role of primary therapist? Readers may infer from some of the articles that the author may be endorsing rabbis taking on the role of primary therapists while in other articles, the author criticizes rabbis who refuse to refer patients to mental health professionals and see themselves as the best and most effective healers.

My impression is that the author does endorse the therapeutic involvement of rabbis who are sufficiently sophisticated, sensitive and knowledgeable of dynamics, psychopathology and psychotherapy, and who are able to differentiate between cases that require the intervention of a professional mental health practitioner and cases that can benefit from their counseling.

However, it is important that the spirit and conception of psychotherapy be respected in the clinic room and that the therapist as well as the patient have the freedom to raise, explore, discuss and deal with all issues that they deem relevant, pertinent and important; whereas, religious issues that seem to require halachic decisions will be dealt with by the patient's religious authority.

Interspersed in the book are brief, pertinent and relevant comments on the issues being discussed by prominent mental health practitioners, researchers, rabbis, as well as by the author.

"In my opinion, there is no specific Jewish psychology or psychiatric treatment protocol, just as there is no specific Jewish way to treat pneumonia, or to surgically remove a gall bladder." (Professor Werblowsky, page 4)

"Appropriate therapeutic support can only be given by a therapist who understands that the religious prohibitions are givens, and the feelings and conflicts of

clients must be dealt within the context of the clients' probable acceptance that the laws about sexual behavior are right, even if s/he does not find them easy or convenient." (Professor Loewenthal, page 7)

"It seems most judicious that rabbis should consult and refer religious patients to mental health practitioners who are religious or at least are sufficiently knowledgeable of Jewish law and customs and respect the values of their patients, and that the latter should consult with and refer their clients to rabbis who have a basic knowledge and understanding of psychopathology and psychotherapy, when there is a need for halachic and rabbinic guidance." (Author, page 7)

"The most important lesson we can learn from this article is that one should not present general questions to a rabbi (and the rabbi should not respond to general questions) but provide specific, relevant and pertinent information so that the rabbi can direct his response to the specific person and situation." (Rabbi Bar Ilan, page 62)

"Torah and mitzvot are not mental health treatments. Torah study and strict adherence to the halacha does not automatically protect us from leading lives that are unbalanced, unhappy, and unfulfilled." (Dr. Klafter, page 72)

I found the book user-friendly, down-to-earth, yet infused with an interesting combination of psychological as well as Jewish concepts and ideas. Mental health practitioners, religious as well as secular, rabbis, and people interested in the interface between psychotherapy and Judaism, will find the book a worthwhile read.

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