Book reviews

Book review policy

The policy of Social Work Review is to offer books for review to ANZASW members in the first instance. New reviewers are welcome and any member who would like to be added to the list is invited to write (preferably by e-mail) or telephone the Book Review Editor. It is most helpful to the Editor if you are able to identify specific titles from those offered below that match your area of interest. If you wish to discuss any of the books, or want to make a more general inquiry about book reviewing you are most welcome to make contact. Once a review is completed, the book becomes the property of the reviewer.

Publications available for review


eBooks also available for review

Address all enquiries to:

Helen Simmons
Book Review Editor
Social Work & Social Policy programme
School of Health & Social Services
Massey University
Private Bag 11-222
Palmerston North 4442
New Zealand

E-mail: H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz


Bo Hejlskov Elven is a clinical psychologist based in Sweden. He is an independent consultant and lecturer on autism and challenging behaviour.

The intention of the book is to be a managing manual for children who have been diagnosed with autism and other developmental disabilities.
The book is separated into six chapters which include: challenging behaviour – definitions and theories; conceptions and misconceptions; adjustment of demands; stress factors – a model for explaining chaos; when conflict happens – keeping it calm; and looking to the future. Each chapter has multiple sub-chapters and includes a summary at the end of the main points covered.

This book was one of the more frustrating that I have read. I found it to be very critical and dismissive of all theories, models and practices that differed from the author’s. It was almost like all that went before needed to be discredited before a new way of thinking/treating was outlined. I found this to be disrespectful and bordering on offensive to both parents and professionals alike. If I had not been reading it for review I would not have continued reading the book.

I did, however, complete it and can now say that not finishing it would have been a real shame as the book has some good ideas and techniques incorporated in it which professional and families could utilise alongside the many tools they already hold within their toolbox.

Overall, while this book does have some good techniques and ideas I do not recommend it as an essential read for social work practitioners. If you are employed directly in this area it may hold some techniques of use for both practitioners and families and could be an additional resource amongst the many already good resources available.

Wendy Fraser, BSW (Hons), PGDipEd, MANZASW.
Registered clinical social worker, CAFMHS.

Interprofessional collaboration in social work practice. Karin Crawford. 2012, London, Sage. 199 pages including references and glossary of terms and abbreviations

It was the title of this book that took my interest initially, as collaboration as a tool and process is something I believe passionately in. When I started reading this book I was initially disappointed to discover that it had a very strongly UK focus, and in fact is probably aimed at beginning practitioners or students in a UK social work context. However, once I was able to move past this disappointment, I appreciated the information about the context and the content of the book.

The book is laid out clearly with a summary of what to expect at the start of each chapter and a summary of what has been covered at the end of each chapter. Each chapter also provides further reading and links, as well as reflective and practical exercises to engage the reader in making links back to their own practice and context. Much of the focus of the book is on meeting the UK National Occupational Standards for Social Work standards within Britain, and ways of gaining competency within collaborative social work practice. While the exercises, legislation and practice examples, as well as the reports and enquiries discussed, are all within the UK context, the book could be well used and the exercises engaged in by a New Zealand-based student merely by some ‘googling’ for appropriate local content. As with any book written outside Aotearoa New Zealand, there was no dialogue around bicultural practice and how to consider tangata whenua (or non-western) concepts of collaboration into our practice. However, again the reflection questions provided throughout encourages the reader to keep the material meaningful in their own context.
What stood out to me in this book, as a side comment really, is that the struggles we have with child deaths, agencies working well together and trusting and working across sectors is not unique to our New Zealand context!! When considering some of the similarities in dialogue, official papers and the challenges of balancing good practice and fiscal constraint, it was also interesting to reflect on how New Zealand follows overseas experiences often with our legislation influences and policy development.

The book sets the social service scene in UK before moving onto linking of theories and frameworks and considering how theory influences collaborative social work practice. Theories considered include systems theory, social exchange theory, social network and activity theory. After some theoretical considerations the book considers values, skills, knowledge and tools and methods useful to support collaboration. In addition it provides examples of collaborative frameworks in use in the UK that could be helpful for evaluation, as well as common assessment tools noting helpful and hindering factors in collaboration. It was pleasing to also note discussion included on the voice of the service users when considering collaborative practices.

For myself, there were few new concepts within the content in this book, however for someone beginning to engage in collaboration and considering how to be collaborative in their practice, this book introduces some foundational and valuable considerations. For those of us with more reading and experience it is a good reminder of what we can do to make collaborative relationships effective for communities and families.

Karen Shepherd
Supervisor and social work consultant.


I’ve bought myself another book, one I’ve been coveting for some time after borrowing a copy from one of our branch members. It arrived yesterday and it might sound rather pathetic but I was very excited about the arrival of a social work text book! I would like to tell you, and the other branch members, my story about the book.

Sometime at the beginning of my formal social work career, I, like other newly minted social work graduates, was struggling to link the theory I had learnt in my studies with the reality of the work place. Was I a radical social worker, did I follow a psycho-social framework, was I task-centred? Where did sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, history, human development etc. fit in with what I was doing? What kind of practitioner was I? I also began supervising students immediately after I graduated so I was confronted with students struggling to find a path through the maze.

I found Social work treatment interlocking theoretical approaches, edited by Francis J. Turner (1974). This book succinctly, using a similar format for each chapter, had 15 chapters addressing 14 theories. Each chapter on theory was compact. It saved my bacon again when I became a student unit supervisor in the mid-80s and thereafter supervising in numerous settings and fields of practice. It certainly helped with a teaching role at Manawatu Polytechnic (UCOL).
The fourth edition was purchased to assist through the years that I occupied the position as national competency assessor for ANZASW. You might imagine the number of portfolios that the panel needed to read and the occasional puzzlement to find a theory I didn’t know about! Many candidates would have received feedback from the panel advising obtaining a copy of Turner’s book to help them clarify their theoretical perspective. By the fourth edition the number of chapters had grown to include 27 theories.

I’ve always had a problem with the word ‘treatment’ used in social work and the book is American, however, do not be deterred from having a look.

The jacket of the hardback copy has a very pleasant surprise – take it off and the other side reveals a wonderful chart of all the interlocking theories. I’ve copied mine and had it laminated!


Edition five has 36 theories and there is, apparently, no end in sight! It would be good to see our indigenous theories published in this kind of book in the future.

This isn’t a review as such as I haven’t read the book and I have no intention of doing so unless I want to hone up on a particular theory. But I strongly recommend it for practitioners who are supervising or teaching or anybody who is just interested. We don’t need to know everything but it’s nice to know where to find it! It’s a wonderful book for ‘dipping into’.

I bought the book online and it cost me nearly $30 less for the fifth edition than it did for the fourth.

Oh in case you are wondering – I think I’m eclectic!

Jacky Sayers
ANZASW Life member


This book is concerned with living an ethical personal and professional life. It is a challenging book, which integrates history, philosophy and science and takes an applied ethics approach to living and working in the helping professions. Michael Carroll and Elisabeth Shaw, write in an engaging personal style which takes the reader with them as they explain and illustrate the components of ethical maturity and the application this has for those working in the helping professions.

The book is comprised of three parts. Part one consists of the first seven chapters which survey the moral landscape, introduce the idea of ethical maturity and contrast this with unethical behaviour, review the history of ethics, the philosophy of Socrates and Aristotle on moral character and moral action, consider the implications of neuroscience in relation
to ethical behaviour, and explore relational ethics. Then having traversed this territory in 122 pages, the authors outline a compelling argument and rationale for ethical maturity.

In part two, the six components of ethical maturity are discussed across ten chapters. The six components are: 1) Ethical sensitivity; 2) Ethical discernment; 3) Ethical implementation; 4) Ethical conversation; 5) Ethical peace; and 6) Ethical growth and development of moral character. Four of the chapters in this part are concerned with ethical discernment and the process and influences upon ethical decision making, while final chapter focuses on training in ethical maturity. Overall these chapters provide a comprehensive and clear explanation of ethical maturity and provide a sound basis for part three which is focused on the application of ethical maturity.

The third part engages with challenges inherent in working with and in organisations, the ethics of gifts and the ethics of research before leading to a thoughtful conclusion.

This book significantly adds to the field of ethics in the helping professions. It reminds all of us that our moral and character development is at the heart of our professional development journey and that the path to being a better a social worker is just one lane within the path towards being a better person. I highly recommend this book to the readership of Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work, and encourage you to engage with the life long challenge of developing your ethical maturity with kindness and compassion for yourself and others.

Dr Kieran O’Donoghue, PhD
Director of Social Work and Social Policy, Massey University.