

and what made them worse. Patient memoirs, including Sheldon's, are no different. What sets her account apart, however, is that her medical background makes her more aware of the process of mental illness as she passes through it.

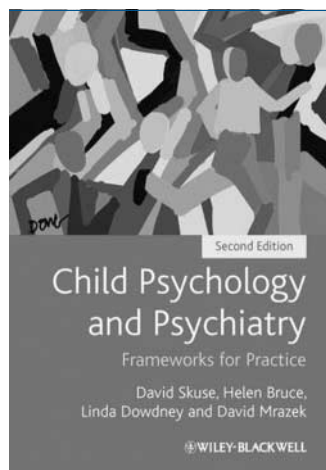
Although Sheldon has never practised, her medical degree informs her understanding of her mental health now and during the many trials she has faced along the way. In a lucid, confessional style she produces a record of her experiences while considering the psychopathology, diagnosis and treatment of her anorexia and schizoaffective disorder. Her intention is to give the reader insight into mental illness as medics would themselves experience and analyse it.

For the clinician, most interesting are Sheldon's criticisms of her care. She is critical of her treatment by ex-colleagues, of misapplied diagnoses and treatment regimes, such as at the specialist eating disorder centre she attended, which seemed to her cruel in the level of discipline it demanded. Her criticism is not intended to shame those that have treated her. Instead her intention is that through accurate recollection of events as they occurred she will be able to inform her reader, whether patient or clinician. Many will feel that as unique and moving as Sheldon's struggle has been, these are sadly stories that they hear every day. Certainly, Sheldon provides a history of depression, anorexia and psychotic illness that would be familiar to most people working in mental health. If anything, her account suffers from her effort to make it as concise and clear as she can. It often seems as if she holds back from describing important aspects of her life, such as her family situation, to push on in her story.

Sheldon's account does not have the weight of accounts like William Styron's *Darkness Visible*, on his experience of depression, nor is it the only book available by a mental health professional on their experiences of mental illness (*Undercurrents* by Martha Manning, a clinical psychologist, is a good example). However, it does describe a unique and brave battle by a patient with a complicated list of psychiatric problems much closer to home. Despite Sheldon's lack of experience, her background provides a route to refresh the empathy of a tired clinician by allowing them a glimpse of what it might have been like for them to go through what their patients have experienced.

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Child Psychology and Psychiatry: Frameworks for Practice (2nd edn)

Edited by David Skuse, Helen Bruce, Linda Dowdney & David Mrazek. Wiley-Blackwell. 2011. £39.99 (pb). 304 pp. ISBN: 9780470973820

The editors of this book seem to have set an arduous task for the contributors: provide an account of the chosen topic in a condensed form limited to an average of five pages (including

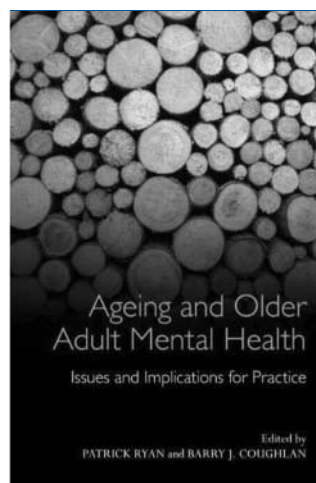
tables!), include recent developments in the field and limit the references to a minimum (at best 25 references). The result is a collection of chapters with themes ranging from family and systemic influences through literacy disorders to paediatric psychopharmacology. This is a remarkable feat given that this is a slim volume (290 pages of text including references). Most of the contributors are well-known names in child and adolescent psychology and psychiatry, mainly, but not exclusively, from the UK and Ireland.

The book is divided into seven sections: developing competencies; promoting well-being; attachment and separation; the impact of trauma and maltreatment; atypical development; assessment; and approaches to intervention. It is targeted at both child and adolescent psychiatrists and clinical child psychologists and their respective trainees. The editors have succeeded in making the topics relevant to both groups and, in fact, the mix of chapters is one of the strengths of the book. The quality and usefulness of the chapters, however, vary widely from those that are outstanding to others that are prosaic and ordinary. The chapters on anxiety disorders in children and adolescents, childhood behaviour problems, eating disorders and family therapy assessment are rather basic. The chapter on psychodynamic approaches does not do justice to the subject. It would have been more useful if some chapters had addressed specific aspects of the topic rather than the whole subject.

However, Muter & Snowling provide a first-rate account of literacy disorders that includes both dyslexia and reading comprehension disorder. Conti-Ramsden & Durkin's chapter on specific language impairment is an elegant summary of the topic. Early-onset bipolar disorder by James is an admirable account of the current state of knowledge on the subject, and Taylor's chapter on diagnostic classification describes the issues facing child and adolescent psychiatry masterfully and is opportune at a moment when DSM and ICD are going through revisions. For these chapters alone, the book is worth buying. A strength of the book is that the 46 short chapters provide something for everyone practising child psychology and psychiatry.

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Ageing and Older Adult Mental Health: Issues and Implications for Practice

Edited by Patrick Ryan & Barry J. Coughlan. Routledge. 2011. £21.99 (pb). 296pp. ISBN: 9780415582902

This is a most unusual and curious book. It took me quite a while to work out its frame of reference, relax and start to appreciate what it has to offer. Ultimately, I concluded that it challenges the lenses we commonly use to consider mental health in older people, making it quite a thought-provoking read.