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In concluding this report, the Sainsbury Centre makes nine recommendations on recruiting and retaining staff. Three of these are directed at the Department of Health: the systematic collection of information on staff vacancies, national workforce planning and a review of the impact of pension schemes on staff retention. The report also reminds the Government that the aims of the National Plan and the National Service Framework for Mental Health will not be achieved without adequate numbers of motivated staff. We await the outcome of the work of the Department of Health's Workforce Action Team, and the local implementation teams. Without their success, the Sainsbury Centre's report will be timely and well meaning, but ineffective.

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Points of View: Stories of Psychopathology

By James E. Mitchell.
Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge.
2001. 222 pp. £17.95 (pb).
ISBN: 1-58391-005-0

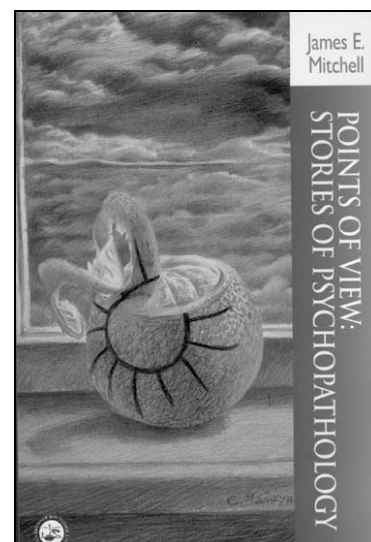
This is an unusual book, primarily written for students but with some appeal for others who would make use of a guide to DSM-IV diagnoses. Its particular claim for attention is that it functions as an aid to learning about diagnosis by the use of well-written and carefully constructed case studies. Unlike most cases studies, these are written in a narrative style, with the people depicted being brought to life by additional touches of detail. For each case study describing the person with the diagnosis, there is a companion story describing the experience or thoughts of

another person in the patient's life, whether a family member, a friend or a mental health professional. We are shown how the individuals think and feel and also how they affect the people around them. There is an emphasis on the difficulties people with the diagnoses are currently experiencing as well as the difficulties this causes in their immediate social environment.

All the major and common psychiatric diagnoses are considered in brief chapters of about 6 or 7 pages (24 chapters in all). Within each chapter the common pattern is: an introduction to the diagnosis; suggestions about key issues to note in the stories; the diagnostic criteria according to DSM-IV; 'stories' from the view point of the patient and another person (although, interestingly, sometimes the story from the perspective of the other person comes first and is considerably longer than that of the patient); a discussion of such issues as the exclusion of other diagnoses or further information on the diagnosis; questions and references.

The result is a well-structured and lively textbook which is most suited to medical students and students of psychiatry. It will doubtless also appeal to students of psychiatric nursing and the other mental health disciplines.

However, there are some limitations to the book – from the perspective of a psychologist who is not satisfied with a view of mental illness constructed entirely within a framework of DSM-IV diagnostic categories. There is no critique of this and relatively little reflection on the difficulties of assigning patients to clear-cut categories. For the most part, the case studies are extremely neat and unquestionably fulfil the diagnostic criteria. This book will not, therefore, help junior mental health professionals think about



the inadequacies of diagnostic constructs or the dimensionality of many of the phenomena described here. The book is also uncompromisingly North American in its perspective; it describes people mostly living small-town American lives, often in the mid-west, operating within a US health care system with its clear and strong emphasis on biological understandings of mental illness and diagnostic tests. Most of the people seem to be white, heterosexual and middle class. Some of the complexities of providing mental health care within a UK multi-cultural inner-city context seem a million miles away.

Despite these concerns, for a textbook on DSM-IV diagnoses, this is a readable and humane book and, as such, I recommend it.

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forthcoming events

Henderson Hospital is pleased to announce that the **6th Annual Maxwell Jones Lecture** will take place on 13 September 2002 at the Royal Institute of British Architects in central London. The Lecturer will be Sandra Bloom, Community Works, Philadelphia, USA, and the Respondent is Valerie Sinason, Director of the Clinic for Dissociative Studies and Consultant Research Psychotherapist, St George's Hospital Medical School, Psychiatry of Disability Department. The first lecture was given 6 years ago to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Henderson Hospital and to provide an opportunity for professionals to further develop understanding of the ideas and practices of therapeutic communities. Admission is free but advance booking is

advisable as places are limited. For further information please contact Sue Garner (tel: 020 8661 1611; fax: 020 8770 3676; e-mail: sgarner@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk).

Power, Public Protection and the Psychological Therapies is the title of a 1-day conference organised by the Prevention of Professional Abuse Network (POPAN). The conference will take place in London on 25 September 2002. Further information can be obtained from POPAN, 1 Wyvil Court, Wyvil Road, London SW8 2TG (tel: 020 7720 1553, e-mail: info@popan.org.uk).

The Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents (APSA) will be holding their annual conference, **Scared of Me? Working with Violent and**

Aggressive Young People, on 26–27 September 2002 at The Institute of Child Health in central London. For further information please contact APSA, 1 Arun House, River Way, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1SL (tel: 01825 760 886; fax: 01825 765 517; e-mail: apsa@bhm.co.uk).

Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust would like to announce a 1-day **Conference/ Psychotherapy Workshop** to be held at the Milton Keynes Postgraduate Medical Centre on 4 October 2002. The workshop is aimed at all members of community mental health teams, general practitioners, counsellors, nurses, social workers and all those who wish to improve their skills and effectiveness with clients. For further information please contact Jane Gurnett, Secretary,