

## Book Reviews . . .

surface problems without promoting an understanding of what needs are served by a couple's present maladaptive behaviour.

They appear to appreciate fully the ingrained nature of such maladaptive behaviour and why "obvious" solutions do not work. Perhaps their position is best stated in their own words:

"We view marital problems as psychological in nature, having transactional and individual determinants". Their understanding of marital dysfunction is based solidly on psychoanalytic developmental psychology but their therapeutic methods are comprehensively eclectic.

This book displays a thoroughly integrated approach to marital therapy. It is amply illustrated by segments of transcripts of therapy sessions and discussion of the therapists responses. Among the verbatim excerpts from therapy tapes are included excerpts of tapes from beginning therapists to illustrate less successful interventions.

Of particular interest in this book is the way in which the therapists work toward promoting the separateness of the spouses within a context of interpersonal union and mutual give-and-take.

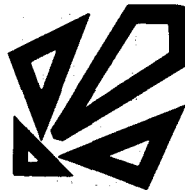
Indeed, this issue of individuality in a setting of mutuality is perhaps the most crucial problem confronting contemporary marriages and the authors treatment of this problem will repay careful study.

This book is a thoroughly contemporary approach to marital therapy. It is theoretically informed and empirically based and readers who themselves are marital therapists will instantly recognise the seemingly intractable problems and ingrained attitudes that they themselves have confronted so many times and will learn something from the way these authors deal with such problems.

Hopefully, "Therapy for Couples" will take its place among other books prescribed as essential reading for all trainee counsellors.

**DR WARWICK W. HARTIN.**  
Executive Director.  
Marriage Guidance Council  
of Victoria.

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"Legal Resources Book" Gardner J. G., Neal D. J., Cashman P. K., (Eds.) Published by Fitzroy Legal-Aid Service \$12.80. 267 pages.

This is the second edition of a book which in its first printing sold very well. This is not surprising as it is a comprehensive and readable book: a truly impressive attempt to bring the law closer to the people.

Because of its comprehensive nature, it is a large volume. Sections include legal aid, consumer's debts, employment, bankruptcy, family, children, courts, pensions, injuries, motor car property damage, crime, complaints, noise, town planning, tenancy, defamation, insurance, mental health and wills. It is produced in loose leaf form so that the latest developments can be inserted. This is necessary to keep faith with that essential character claimed by the law, that it is living. Each section contains margin headings to aid quick reference, and a good index is found at the back.

Careful consideration must be given to the aims of the book and its achievement of the same. The aims are: one, to produce a book concerned with "poverty law areas" —

this was a need of both law practitioners and people in welfare service occupations — two, to put people in a position where they could solve their own problems (page vii).

The book reputedly sits in most solicitors' offices indicating perhaps that many solicitors appreciate a comprehensive book on law in Victoria, particularly "poverty law", written in layman's language. They would also appreciate the efforts against oversimplification of the law. Many extra references are given to expand consideration of the topic under discussion.

The book will obviously be of great use to the welfare service occupations especially in the following ways. One, a guide for understanding and following the implications of the law when acting for a client. This is not to suggest that welfare workers will cease referring people to solicitors, rather it will aid a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving, and one in which all participants will now have greater opportunity of understanding. The reason why referrals to solicitors will not cease is probably because after reading the relevant sections, most workers will welcome legal consultation for the book does not mystify, it indicates, the complexity of the law. Two, it will act as an interim aid in those numerous situations where one needs guidelines and cannot reach or contact a solicitor. Three, it will aid checking legal implications so that more appropriate referrals can be made.

Already this discussion has suggested that the second aim of the book, namely to act as a guide to practical problem solving, may not be achieved. Firstly, as the book is about poverty law, presumably poor people might be expected to use it as a tool in problem solving. This idea

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seems to be incompatible with many aspects of the book. For example, an extensive English vocabulary is presumed and this means that many of the poor, and many migrants, will not be able to use it. This fact can be demonstrated by the following explanation of bail, "An accused may be discharged from custody on his entering into an undertaking with or without sureties, that he will appear for the hearing at the time and place named in the undertaking." (page 12-29). Further, the mode of possible collection of maintenance payment is listed as garnishment, seizure of property and sequestration of estate (p.5-21). Often legal terms are explained, but some such as "tort" and "lien" are introduced without explanation.

Secondly, although the procedures for some legal action are given in easy to follow point form, some aspects are not strongly stressed. Good examples of these procedural formats are the steps involved with a consumer grievance, starting from approaching the retailer, through to approaching the Small Claims Tribunal. The nine steps involved in having a claim heard in the tribunal are also listed (pages 2-72, 2-86). Yet it is not until the section on debts that the importance of keeping a copy of all correspondence is mentioned, and this is a very basic rule for survival in many legal dealings.

For some of these reasons it is pertinent to wonder whether pamphlets such as those produced by the Law Department might not be more successful in bringing the law directly to the people. One can imagine people being more likely to pick up and read a pamphlet than the Legal Resource Book, mainly because the book is large and looks rather scholastic. The pamphlets are pro-

duced in many languages and deal with specific sections of the law such as divorce, wills, the courts and so on. However, it is still arguable whether these bring 'poverty law' to the people. Perhaps something more subversive is needed to achieve this aim, something similar to survival information.

For instance, the Legal Resources Book makes no bones about the fact that police often violate a citizen's rights during questioning, and that little redress is possible after violation (page 6-8,10; 12-13,20). Perhaps further time should be spent indicating what might happen if a youth 'courteously tells a police officer that he doesn't wish to answer any questions until he has spoken to a lawyer'. (page 6-10)

Similar information could be available on court appearances. For instance, details on the procedures and personnel involved in the courts. Advice could be given on the advantages of addressing the bench in a polite submissive manner, how a solicitor might manoeuvre so that cases are heard before a certain magistrate, how to avoid being goaded by the opposing barrister. Without this type of information an idealised account of the law in action is presented.

But perhaps this is expecting too much from a single resource book which covers a great deal, and is an excellent exercise in bringing the law closer to the people even if, as I suspect, it will be brought through intermediaries, rather than direct.

**Carol Mathew,**



**The Child Protection Team Handbook: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Managing Child Abuse and Neglect.**

Edited by Barton D. Schmitt  
Garland STPM Press, New York and London 1977  
pp 435  
Price \$24.50

Publications on the subject of Child Abuse appear to be rolling off the presses at an ever increasing (some might say alarming) rate, and I was not overjoyed to see Dr. Kempe's name on the dust jacket of this one: "With a foreword by C. Henry Kempe". I admit to making irreverent comparisons with P. G. Wodehouse and J. P. Donleavy, who it appears, successfully reworked, or in the latter's case, rework, the same old theme. Reviewing the book in Australia's Garden State, where the grass is growing lush and thick under the abused child's feet, added further whimsical irony.

The book sets out to supply the reader with "a practical down-to-earth handbook for multidisciplinary child protection teams". It has been suggested by members of many professions that the "multidisciplinary" aspect is more of a problem than the Child Abuse itself so the need for such a book has obviously been noted.

The editor assumes that the reader will have some basic knowledge of the subject but recommends that the reader who is new to