Counselling for Depression

Paul Gilbert
Sage, 1992, £8.95, 160pp

This is a useful, practical book, well suited to the needs of student counsellors, and helpful to their trainers. Gilbert approaches the subject from a cognitive/interpersonal stance, and he is closer to the behaviourists than to practitioners of psychodynamic leanings.

The book focuses on work with clients who are likely to be experiencing reactive depression. Numerous pages include lists of factors relevant to understanding the client's unhappiness, or outlining the steps towards the goals for change, and there is ample and interesting case material.

Throughout the book, key issues for the counsellor in structuring her or his work are set out in boxes — very helpful and quick reference points for trainees and trainers alike. They would make useful starters for discussion periods, and refreshers for the more experienced.

Gilbert does not attempt to teach work with the suicidal or psychotically depressed person, but points the reader to the copious bibliography. Strangely, he makes a glaring omission — he makes no mention at all of the work of Dorothy Rowe.

Margaret Novakovic

Counselling for Anxiety Problems

Richard Hallam
Sage, 1992, £8.95, 160pp

Hallam, like Paul Gilbert, is a clinical psychologist, and shares a similar approach to problem solving. This book will be very useful to trainee counsellors and those whose work and interests bring them into contact with anxious people.

The book starts with a thorough theoretical framework, and a chapter on the possible origins of anxiety problems, and goes on to be a practical manual, with case illustrations, and good chapters on overcoming obstacles, and endings.

As with *Counselling for Depression*, work with very seriously affected clients is not attempted: for instance those with severe obsessive/compulsive disorders. Rather surprisingly, sexual anxieties are not mentioned at all. That said, these two volumes, part of a new and no doubt expanding series from Sage, make sound and practical handbooks, and useful reference points for both beginning students and the more experienced, as they continue to develop skills in helping clients with these two closely-related problems.

Margaret Novakovic

Problem to Solution: Brief Therapy with Individuals and Families

Evan George, Chris Iveson, Harvey Ratnet
Brief Therapy Press, 1990

As brief as the title suggests, this little book attracted me by its punchy chapter headings, headings such as 'The Best of Five: An Eating Disorder' and 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: A Case of Depression'. The authors all work in the field of Brief Therapy, and their commitment and enthusiasm for the subject shows very clearly. However, I take issue with one of the transcripts. There certainly seems to be more therapist talk than client input, but perhaps I'm being unfair. Brief Therapy seems to have over a 50% success rate as assessed by both the therapist and the client. It is cost-effective in terms of time (the average number of sessions is three, but it's not clear how long each session is — the authors talk of a 'break' mid-session). Presumably it saves money, too. The eight stages of the approach are clearly set out and, as the authors state, these serve as the 'blueprint' for further sessions.

This is a highly readable book, useful for when we feel 'stuck' with clients. My only quibble is that my brand-new copy fell apart due to the poor binding. A pity, as it's a book I'd use regularly.

Jen Popkin

A Glastonbury Reader

Compiled and edited by John Matthews
Aquarian, 1991, £8.99, 304pp

I admit that I groaned when I saw the title: surely not another book about the Glastonbury Mysteries? Yes indeed, but thankfully on closer inspection it proves to be a valuable book; an artful anthology from the treasure-house of chroniclers — historians, poets, mystics and visionaries — drawn over the centuries to this 'sacred enclosure' of Ancient Avalon centred in the Sphinx-like Tor overlooking this small Somerset market town.

In 300 pages, with the aid of 21 extracts from writings old and new (some of them having been long out of print), the reader illuminates all the great traditions and mysteries of Glastonbury: The prehistoric land temple of the Glastonbury Zodiac cast in the shape of the land which to this day causes seekers to look for homes in 'Pisces' or 'Aquarius' or other astrologically favoured sites in Avalon.

Though the historical presence of King Arthur finds little support, the ageless myth and power of Arthur of the Holy Grail as an esoteric teaching about the eternal quest is forever connected with Avalon, the Celtic Otherworld. These

mysteries are shown to have their roots as far back as ancient Assyria and Atlantis. Perhaps the most fulsome and fascinating extracts explore Glastonbury as the Cradle of Christianity in England through the legends relating the journeys of Joseph of Arimathea with the boy Christ through Cornwall and Avalon, and later, after the crucifixion, Joseph's arrival to establish the first above-ground Christian Church in Europe below the Tor, bringing with him the vessel of the Holy Grail. Here A.H. Lewis's 'Christ in Cornwall' and J.W. Taylor's extract from *The Coming of the Saints* are full of significant historical, linguistic and cultural evidence establishing Glastonbury's unique heritage.

This book covers an immense amount of ground from sober historical scholarship to magical inspiration, represented by psychic archeologist Frederick Bligh Bond's scripts of automatic writing allegedly guided by long dead monks, giving rich and evocative insights into the history and life of Glastonbury Abbey. For the newcomer and dedicated Avalonian alike, this is a convincing and illuminating testament to the extraordinary and deservedly enduring allure of the Isle of Avalon — the 'Holyest Erthe' in England.

Christine Brienne

How to Get More Clients

Val Falloon
Brainwave (BCM Raft, London WCIN 3XX), 1991, £9.95, 160pp

Most of the therapists I know worry about their low incomes. They need this brainstorm of a book that contains enough ideas to have at least a few that will suit every taste. Some of the ideas seem even to me on the cranky side — for instance Val Falloon suggests that a therapist as a sideline business could manufacture for other therapists a scented 'clock candle' that would emit a waft of sage oil when the client's fifty minutes were up. But much else in the book took my fancy. Some of its advice is provocative. Try this, for instance: 'If your clients do not express a sharp intake of breath when you mention your fee then you are probably not charging enough', a proposition attributed to Andrew Ferguson, who is the business guru behind much of the book's approach. Or how about Falloon urging the reader to take on any new challenge offered, to be prepared to 'give it a go'? Falloon, for instance, knowing nothing about a particular subject, would readily accept to write a book about it and then quickly study to become an 'instant expert'. The chutzpah I admire, although it made me anxious about whether this present book fell into the category of quickie potboiler, since very little is admitted about the author's own career.

Other advice in the book is simply sensible, although not necessarily obvious: the author is given to repetition and at many points in the book it is stressed that

you should only normally expect a 1% response to your leaflets, although this can be increased by having your own mailing list and by making follow-up phone calls. A whole chapter describes in detail the rather rushed and unsuccessful organising of a workshop for women, and what worked and what didn't work. Nobody came from an expensive ad in the *Guardian*. 'The best response came from leaflets picked up at women's centres, a health food shop, the Mind, Body and Spirit exhibition, the *Pathways Bulletin*, the counsellors' network and a friendly local museum.' Workshops, Falloon concludes, should start to be organised at least nine months in advance, fees should be paid in advance (with a reduction for early bookings) and, again, fees should not be set too low.

Leaflets should emphasise the therapist's uniqueness and should answer the punter's likely objections and resistance. The leaflet's design is vital: examine other leaflets, and model yours on one that appeals to you. Don't cram in too much text. Let the main heading be something that grabs the reader's attention. Look for cheap printers in *Exchange and Mart*.

Falloon's Rule No. 1 is to locate your practice where potential clients live, 'typical clients' being 'white, female, single, middle-class Guardian readers'. Rule No. 5 is to think of ten people who could refer clients to you and then to phone them up. Rule No. 6 is to ask prospective clients what they need, rather than to focus on them asking you about the type of therapy you offer. Rule No. 10 is to monitor who your clients are coming from and then to keep in regular touch with, or to socialise with, these source people.

The book is worth obtaining just for these twelve commandments, but it's as a rag bag of ideas that it proves most stimulating; here, as a final taster, are three ideas on the wilder side that appealed to me:

- Offer free 'review' sessions to local journalists, even to local shops.
- Set up a newsletter about your speciality and promote yourself through this.
- Take over the administration of the referral service you trained with and syphon off a few clients for yourself.

So, the book's a fraction ethically loose, but highly recommended nonetheless for exercising the imagination.

Nicholas Albery

The Handbook of Play Therapy

Linnet McMahon
Routledge, 1992, £14.99, 237pp

This is mainly about play therapy with children, although there is some mention of work with families. There is a good appreciation oF humanistic approaches, especially the person-centred approach of Carl Rogers as exemplified in the work of Virginia Axline, and some mention of gestalt. There is also a good

deal of use of psychoanalytic approaches, particularly that of Winnicott, and the developmental approach of Erikson and others. The work of Rachel Pinney is also mentioned.

The book covers a wide range of problems which can be tackled through play therapy with children of different ages, and has a sensitive discussion of the use of 'anatomically correct' dolls in investigating sexual abuse. Plenty of examples are given, and this book can be recommended to anyone who is involved in play therapy, or who feels that they might get involved in play therapy in some way.

John Rowan

Borderline: A Psychological Study of Delusional Thinking

Peter Chadwick
Routledge, 1992, £40.00, 181pp

This is one weird book. Don't buy it if you want to know anything about the ordinary usage, the psychiatric label of 'borderline' (between neurosis and psychosis) because it isn't about that. It is about psychotic delusions.

The next weirdness is the research. The author is a research psychologist at Birkbeck College, and the statistical results of a research study conducted by him are reported in two of the chapters. The main idea he had was that people who were or had been psychotic had a bias towards thinking that what they believed was true: they were reluctant to give up their ideas even in the face of contrary evidence. This turned out to be true, even if they were in remission at the moment, and even if they were having antipsychotic medication. But all the other ideas he tested came out rather inconclusively.

However, most of the book is not about this, but about some cases of people with delusions, including his own case: in the past he had had delusions himself. These case histories are certainly weird. These were not people treated by any form of therapy generally known, apart from the drugs which most of them were having most of the time. They were befriended by the author, who knew them closely for periods up to five years, the relationship including walks, talks, visits, meals together and so forth. None of these people got better, and if they did change for the better it seems to be nothing to do with the author's interventions. The case history usually ends with some such phrase as 'I broke off with him' or 'I terminated my relationship with him'.

At one point he gets quite enthusiastic about 'Radio 1 therapy', where by having Radio 1 on, 24 hours a day, one does not hear the voices of hallucination, and they eventually go away. But in a later chapter where he is discussing various approaches to delusion removal, this one

is not even mentioned.

One would have thought that there would have been some mention of psychotherapy, but it does not come into the index, and the one or two references to it are invariably disparaging. At several points the author seems to indicate that he is or was a counsellor, but no details are given of his training as such. He appears not to have done any work on himself except his 'self-analysis', which mostly appears to consist of intellectual ruminations after reading books about psychology, psychiatry or psychotherapy. His account of his childhood makes great play with the fact that everything was fine until his mother discovered, when he was five years old, that his father was having an affair. She left her husband, taking with her the author and his brother, and never spoke a good word about him thereafter. Her whole character changed for the worse. The father died soon afterwards. That is it. That is the story. But this is not what causes delusions. This is what we call a screen memory — something used to hide the deeper problems. So this is really the main weirdness of this book — that it is a discussion of delusions which ranges widely over the field, bringing in all sorts of information (there is a bibliography of fifteen pages), but never discusses in any way the possible causes of these problems. Instead we are warned about 'the psychoanalytic con', and thus get off the hook of any real self-examination in the presence of another person who is calling one's bluff.

He also avoids the real issue in another area. All through the book there are references to mysticism, and the author clearly thinks he has had some mystical experiences. However, again here he never joined a group of any kind, or consulted people trained in mystical traditions. He appears to think that Taoism is a kind of Buddhism, for example. In any case, what he describes seems to be the classic kind of ego-inflation that the good teachers warn against taking too seriously. Consequently all his remarks about mysticism are flawed and curiously half-hearted.

What would be needed, of course, is a suitable psychotherapy. It could be Jungian analysis (Zurich or archetypal schools, not London school), psychosynthesis, transpersonal, primal integration, biosynthesis or the new Grof therapy (holotropic) specifically designed to deal with spiritual emergencies. And of course these are not available everywhere, though they are quite widespread. The author was actually advised at one point to go to a Jungian analyst, but apparently ignored the advice.

All in all this is a very peculiar book, which however does give a very good insight into the deluded mind and how it works.

John Rowan

The Art of the Obvious: Developing Insight for Psychotherapy and Everyday Life

Bruno Bettelheim and Alvin A. Rosenfeld
Thames & Hudson, 1993, £16.95, 247pp.

This is a good book, mostly by Rosenfeld, on handling children in psychotherapy, in residential settings, and in life generally. However, that is not the way the book is presented. It is presented as a book mostly by Bettelheim on the supervision of psychotherapists.

The form of the book is five long chapters, purporting to be the record of supervision seminars between Bettelheim and various professionals. However, the introduction makes it clear that these have been edited by Rosenfeld (after Bettelheim's death) in such a complete way as to be fiction rather than fact.

Rosenfeld comes across as a star pupil of Bettelheim, echoing his views and even speaking for him many times. Many people may be misled by the blurb into thinking that is a very different book from that which it actually is. Anyone wanting a good book on the supervision of trainees in adult psychotherapy must still go to *Dialogues for Therapists* by Margaret Rioch and others.

John Rowan