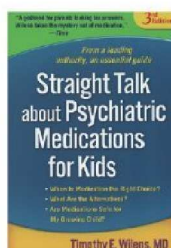


Book reviews



Straight Talk about Psychiatric Medication for Kids

Author: Timothy E Wilens
Publisher: Guilford Press
Pages: 325
Price: £23.36
ISBN: 1593858827

THIS BOOK aims to answer all the questions readers may have about mental, emotional or behavioural problems in young people that could be treated with medication.

The author dismisses as 'hysteria' the media coverage that has been critical of the use of psychotropic medications in children less than six years of age, and argues that there is a strong biological basis for childhood disorders and that 'brain-based' disorders should be treated. This sets the overall tone of the text, which is biased towards biological theories of causation and treatment.

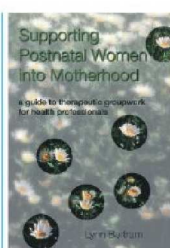
The first part of the book details basic pharmacology, the importance of accurate diagnosis, and treatment planning and processes. It emphasises maintaining caution, monitoring, seeking second opinions and developing a collaborative, questioning attitude with prescribers.

The second part discusses common childhood conditions such as attentional and disruptive behaviour disorders, autism and anxiety related disorders.

Part three addresses the main classes of psychotropic drugs, including typical dosages for children. Side effects and adverse effects are discussed in the style of a drug formulary. Little attention is given to concerns about 'washing out' or changing from one drug to another. The book finishes with some tables of common drugs, a drug monitoring log, and a list of relevant organisations.

However, this book lacks detail, critical review and an auditable trail of evidence, so health professionals should recommend other texts specific to children's or families' problems.

Richard Lakeman, lecturer, school of nursing, Dublin City University, and Sinead Buckley, lecturer, school of nursing, Dublin City University



Supporting Postnatal Women into Motherhood

Author: Lynn Bertram
Publisher: Radcliffe
Pages: 214
Price: £21.95
ISBN: 1857757330

THIS IS a valuable 'How to...' book that offers a blend of therapeutic, educational and social perspectives clustered around the setting up and running of a support group for postnatal women. Bertram is a practice counsellor working in the NHS and this book comes out of her therapeutic experience with clients.

While cutting straight to the core of difficulties many women experience at the point of childbirth and beyond, this book also addresses the often overlooked fact that many women are ill prepared for motherhood.

In an easily accessible style, Bertram gently quashes the myth of innate maternal instinct and explores a multitude of issues faced by the mother and the clinician at this life-changing time. She outlines the importance of focusing on feelings and offers practical guidance to the professional in the management of these aspects of care, with a particular focus on work within a group.

This book is suitable for health practitioners working with mothers and families, preschool/primary teachers, voluntary sector agencies such as the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children, alternative therapists and mothers.

The author takes its theoretical base broadly from the psychoanalytical school but keeps up to date with the contributions of neuroscience in identifying the link between the mother's role and the development of her baby's brain.

When funding for projects such as this are difficult to achieve and maintain, Bertram's book should provide an invaluable basis for links between professional partnerships that can only strengthen the development of this crucial work.

Janet Smith, clinical nurse specialist and psychotherapist



Living with Bipolar Disorder

Author: Neel Burton
Publisher: Sheldon Press
Pages: 130
Price: £7.99
ISBN: 1847090546

THIS VOLUME is aimed at service users and carers, and describes bipolar disorder in an accessible way. It covers the history of the condition, assessment, diagnosis and service provision.

Although the author recognises that evidence-based treatment comprises pharmacological, psychological and social therapies, the book includes more detail on drug treatments than on psychosocial therapies. This is disappointing since evidence suggests that both of these interventions play an important role in the treatment and management of bipolar disorder, and in preventing relapse. The final section on supporting carers and families is well written, and highlights that their needs must always be considered.

A major criticism is that the book does not use references, which makes critical analysis difficult. However, guidance on diagnosis, treatment and management appears to be broadly in keeping with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on bipolar disorder.

Another drawback is that the author encourages the service user or carer to ask their psychiatrist a variety of questions. There is little reference to support the other sources of support and expertise, such as the wider multidisciplinary team, in assisting people with bipolar disorder towards recovery. This may alienate other professionals and give service users the inaccurate message that help can only be provided by their doctor.

Despite this, I would recommend the book to service users, carers and mental health professionals.

Tim McDougall, nurse consultant (Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services/lead nurse (CAMHS), Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust