

# Book Reviews

**Effective Psychotherapy: A Handbook of Research.** Edited and with commentaries by Alan S. Gurman and Andrew M. Razin. Pergamon General Psychology Series, vol. 70. Elmsford, N.Y.: Pergamon Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 628. \$32.50.

Ideology and theory have most often served as justification for the value of alternate approaches to formal helping. Analytic, behavioristic, and humanistic interventions have each found their defense in competing values and theoretical frameworks. As a consequence, debates concerning the superiority of one or another form of helping have been hopelessly deadlocked in the absence of ideological consensus and theoretical homogeneity. As Charles Pierce has observed, when arguments are based on a priori, intuitive reasoning, given differences of opinion among equally rational observers, who is to be considered correct? As approaches to formal helping have multiplied into the hundreds, this richness of alternatives has placed practitioners and students in a potentially bewildering and frustrating position. The options have appeared to be either arbitrary dogmatism or roving eclecticism.

Yet, a rapidly changing societal climate in which concern for effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability are of paramount importance has made such subjective intervention increasingly untenable. Clients, individually and collectively, are actively demanding effective assistance, thus transforming their personal troubles into public issues. A new pragmatism is emerging in the helping professions, and this pragmatism is seeking its justification not in ideology or theory but, rather, in empirically demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency.

Critics of this empirical pragmatism see dangers. Its epistemology is seen as anti-intellectual and atheoretical, and its concern for observables is seen as depreciating the value of the spirit. Its emphasis on controlled scientific study is seen as mechanistic and insensitive to the uniqueness of the individual. Partializing the individual into observable units sufficient to permit scientific study is seen as resulting in extreme oversimplification. And, as if these criticisms were not sufficient, it is pointed out that while placing a premium on objectivity this empirical pragmatism is grounded in the subjective domain of a scientific ideology.

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Somewhere in between the advocates and the critics of this new pragmatism are the vast majority of practitioners and students. Most are disenchanted with previously tried approaches to helping, reluctant to make arbitrary choices among competing alternatives, unwilling to settle for roving eclecticism, and skeptically willing to give this new "scientific" approach a hearing. For this majority, as well as for the advocates, Gurman and Razin have provided a significant service. The editors have brought together thirty-nine of the most prominent scholars in the area of psychotherapy and behavior-therapy research to examine conceptual and methodological issues and to critically and thoroughly detail research findings to date concerning the intervenors' contribution to effective psychotherapy. Most of the authors define psychotherapy broadly to include formalized methods for helping people with psychological difficulties and usually include among its practitioners psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers as well as a variety of other specially prepared intervenors. This volume, together with S. Garfield and A. Bergin's revised *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), provides the mental health practitioner and student who are willing to explore the merits of a scientific approach to practice with excellent beginning points. A reading of this volume will provide a sense of the current conceptual and methodological limits circumscribing the scientific study of the intervenor in psychotherapy and the product of that study to date. Most important, the reader will have an opportunity to experience the process of an effectiveness-oriented, empirically based, scientific approach to understanding practice.

Significant questions are explored either directly or indirectly in this volume. Can empirical information, derived from scientific research, enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the artful offering of interpersonal help? Can empirical, scientific research lead to an understanding of the helper's personal contribution to intervention effects? Can research clarify what it is about a helper that results in helpfulness or hurtfulness? Can science disentangle the helper's contribution to the process and outcome of intervention from situational, technological, and client contributions? Is effective helping in fact at all a result of who the helper is, or is it primarily a function of techniques used or client-situational conditions?

Several thematic conclusions are either directly or indirectly reached by many of these thirty-nine contributors: (1) Effectiveness is among the most relevant criteria for the assessment of psychotherapy (e.g., the title, *Effective Psychotherapy*). (2) The path to effectiveness is through scientific research (e.g., the subtitle, *A Handbook of Research*). (3) With few exceptions (simple phobias, manic-depressive symptoms, some sexual difficulties), intervention techniques and technologies have been found to be equally effective; or, stated otherwise, few techniques have yet been demonstrated to have specific effects over and above what is apparently common to most. (4) The effects of psychotherapy, as currently practiced, are to a large extent placebo effects. (5) While it is important to develop and test specific effective techniques, it is at least equally urgent that what is common to the various forms of effective interpersonal helping be specified — that is, the personal relationship components and especially those of the

intervenor. (6) Effective intervention is not solely a technical matter, but, rather, it is highly personal and, in practice, an art. (7) The scientific study of intervention can inform its artful application.

Aside from these general themes, individual authors examine specialized areas and present their specific interpretations and conclusions. The editors have organized the volume in a temporal or developmental order, beginning with chapters on conceptualization and methodology. The editors freely offer editorial comments at the end of each chapter, and, while this provides a valuable second perspective, it can well leave the reader wondering how the primary author would have responded to the editors.

In the introduction, Allen Bergin is the first of the contributors to assert that the power of intervention techniques is pale by comparison with that of personal influence and to suggest that at present the effective factors are the same for all therapies and are shared in common with all types of healing and influence processes. Associating himself with Frank, Bergin infers that techniques are the "ritual" by which personal influences are mediated. While the challenge of the 1950s and 1960s was evaluation of outcome, Bergin sees the current challenge to be development of an objective account of the personal factors that make the difference between constructive change and deterioration.

Hans Strupp, after expressing his faith in empirical research as the final arbitrator of the controversies surrounding this area of investigation, calls attention to the need for work at the conceptual level and proceeds to present a conceptual analysis of the nature of therapeutic influence. Strupp's conceptualization is similar to Bergin's. The effects of psychotherapy are viewed as a result of interpersonal forces operating in a human relationship structured to achieve changes that one chooses to call therapeutic. Consonant with this interpersonal view, Strupp does not see the study of single treatment variables as promising but, rather, endorses a multivariate approach to analysis built on a conceptualization of relationships which are not only unidirectional (helper to helpee) but at times reciprocal or bidirectional.

Fiske approaches the methodological problem somewhat differently and asserts, instead, that there is a definite ceiling to methodological development in this area. He suggests that this ceiling is very close to where we are now. Fiske sees progress as stemming from the study of innovative, re-orienting questions in which molecular acts of the intervenor and client are examined in relationship.

Beginning the temporal-developmental organization of the remaining chapters, William E. Henry presents a summary report of his previously published survey of 4,000 therapists (analysts, psychiatrists, social workers, and psychologists) in which pathways into the profession and personal lives of the professionals are examined. Henry argues that currently mental health manpower is neither trained for nor believes in community mental health concepts and principles and that a shift in manpower sources is needed if a community mental health approach is in fact to be realized.

Henry's consideration of manpower is continued in Sol Garfield's chapter concerning research on the training of professional psychotherapists. Garfield calls for a clarification of what is to be taught. He recommends

that effectiveness should be a major criterion for selecting content in which client change is central, rather than process or supervisory criteria. Garfield further advocates microteaching, that is, teaching of specific skills rather than broad concepts, accompanied by opportunities for practical application and feedback.

Five additional chapters explore research concerning the development and ideology of the psychotherapist and will be of selective interest to various readers. Research on the level of experience as a factor in effectiveness is critically examined by Auerbach and Johnson, the intervenors' attitudes toward mental illness and health by Rabkin, and theoretical orientations of therapists by Sundland. The chapter by Anthony and Carkhuff should be of particular interest to those concerned with the role and effectiveness of functional professionals, that is, those performing formal helping functions yet without the usual academic credentials. Much of the research in this chapter emanates from Carkhuff's own work, which has emphasized training in interpersonal skills. This is both a strength and weakness of this chapter. Given the increasing interest in self-help, the chapter by Emrick, Lassen, and Edwards, which reviews research on nonprofessional peers as therapeutic agents, is a welcome contribution. Unfortunately, the authors have restricted their review to research concerning self-help groups and have left untouched the equally significant area of natural helping efforts as these occur at the neighborhood and individual levels.

Eleven chapters explore research on the conduct and experience of psychotherapy, leaving few areas of relevant research untouched. Therapist-patient compatibility are examined in three chapters by Berzins (matching), Sattler (racial similarity), and Razin (A-B variable). The nature of the psychotherapist's impact is analyzed in five chapters by Wilkins (expectancies), Pope (style), Johnson and Matross (social psychological variables), Singer and Luborsky (countertransference), and Lambert, Bergin, and Collins (deterioration effects). Advocates of the expectancy hypothesis will find Wilkins's chapter particularly challenging, for he concludes that very little research evidence exists to support the popular assumption that intervenor expectancies play a role in causing change. Wilkins does make a useful distinction between the deterministic (causal) usage of expectancies and the actuarial (associative) usage and does conclude that the latter holds promise as a predictor of outcome. It is important to bear in mind when reviewing Wilkins's chapter that research concerning the role of situation-induced and client-experienced expectancies is not included in the analysis (see, e.g., Shapiro and Morris, in Garfield and Bergin's revised *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change*). Lambert, Bergin, and Collins's chapter on therapist-induced deterioration should be required reading for practitioners and students alike, for it presents a scholarly analysis of research on a most troubling area requiring serious attention. The evidence clearly indicates that professional helpers at times harm their clients. The authors call attention to this research, the pain and waste which is at the core of such experiences, and the meager controls currently existing. These authors remind us that there is no psychological equivalent of a Food and Drug Administration to monitor intervention methods and root out unproven claims or mispractices.

The final three chapters in this section consider research concerning interpersonal skills and relationship. Mitchell, Bozarth, and Krauft reappraise research on intervenor accurate empathy, nonpossessive warmth, and genuineness, and Gurman examines research concerning the client's perception of these relationship qualities. Wilson and Evans examine research on the relationship in behavioral therapies. Mitchell, Bozarth, and Krauft's analysis of the core conditions of empathy, warmth, and genuineness is an especially significant contribution to this much studied area. The chapter includes recent research findings (especially the Arkansas psychotherapy study) derived from heterogeneous samples of therapists and clients (many outside client-centered contexts) and presents conclusions which are much more complex and less optimistic than in earlier reviews. For additional perspectives on this body of research, the reader may wish to refer to Parloff, Waskow, and Wolfe's chapter in the revised Garfield and Bergin *Handbook*, as well as the Lambert, Stein, and DeJulio review in the *Psychological Bulletin* (1978, vol. 85, no. 3).

The last section of this volume examines a methodology for studying the intervenor's experiences of the psychotherapeutic process (Orlinsky and Howard) and the role of the intervenor in assessing outcome (Mintz). Mintz's chapter is well placed, for, in the final analysis, the question of effectiveness rests on matters of perspective. Earlier in this volume, Gurman, Razin, Bergin, and Fiske advocate use of multiple perspectives (client, intervenor, independent judge, objective data) in the assessment of outcome, with primacy given to the client perspective. Mintz concludes the volume by calling attention to the unique qualifications of the therapist in assessing therapeutic outcomes and reminds us that, while objective scientific outcome research may be most appropriate for examination of specific changes, the question of the goodness or badness of a change is essentially nonscientific.

The teaching and learning of scientific, research-based approaches to intervention are heavily dependent on the availability of high-quality published reviews of relevant research findings. The Gurman and Razin volume is among the most comprehensive and scholarly analyses published to date and joins the revised Garfield and Bergin *Handbook* as a valuable resource in the field of interpersonal intervention. Those willing to explore the questions raised earlier in this review will find much material for thought in these pages. Overall, this work will provide the reader with a sense of a new empirical pragmatism and its potential for the development of grounded intervention theories.

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**Canadian Social Policy.** Edited by Shankar A. Yelaja. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1978. Pp. xiv + 321. \$9.00 (cloth); \$6.00 (paper).

In his preface, the editor of this book recognizes the difficulty of combining his two stated objectives: to help students begin to understand welfare concepts, issues, and processes, and to stimulate discussion on policy issues.