

traumatized and, consequently, most of us could benefit from learning about the risks as well as the satisfaction that may accompany helping those who have experienced trauma. After all, the chapter devoted to humor is something that anyone, from any profession, can relate to, and make use of in all aspects of life.

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POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: HANDBOOK. Silva, R. R. (Ed.). (2004). New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 224 pages. ISBN # 0-39370-412-2. List price: \$22.95 (Paperback).

In his Preface to *Posttraumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Handbook*, Raul R. Silva states that he sought to create a handbook for

clinicians that focused on posttraumatic stress in children and adolescents. Through a range of contributors, Silva has effectively compiled an accessible guide that highlights many issues central to understanding posttraumatic responses in children and adolescents. Focusing on studies and clinical work done with children and adolescents, this handbook combines both clinical experience and research findings to provide information helpful to clinicians working with children or adolescents who have been affected by traumatic experiences.

Contributions to this volume cover basic information about PTSD such as epidemiology, etiology, risk factors, and vulnerability versus resiliency factors, as well as deal with practical aspects of PTSD for clinicians, such as assessment and treatment, PTSD in the legal arena, and clinical anecdotes. Additionally, theoretical material is included that addresses important problems, such as differences between child and adult responses to trauma, differential diagnoses, gender differences, and intergenerational links of PTSD. Throughout this handbook, the contributors review data gathered from the child population to create a framework for examining childhood PTSD. They also compare findings from adults versus children to illustrate aspects of PTSD that differ across age groups.

In the larger traumatic stress studies field, much of our existing knowledge about PTSD comes from work with adult populations. The inclusion of many empirical findings with adults in the book reflects the current state of research in this area. One of the strengths of the book is that the contributors review and discuss clinical work and research done with children instead of simply applying adult research to this younger population. Across the text, the thoughtful comparisons of findings from child versus adult samples provide the basis for a compelling argument that the field needs to reexamine the practice of applying criteria for adult PTSD to youth.

Some of the most interesting material in the handbook addresses the issue of diagnosing PTSD in children. While the criteria for PTSD diagnosis in adults are now generally accepted, the application of these criteria to children and adolescents continues to be complex and controversial. Unlike adults, children tend to show more variability in their responses to trauma, in part based on their developmental stage. Through thoughtful reviews, the contributors have demonstrated the need for continuing work on PTSD assessment and diagnosis in children and adolescents. The chapters, taken together, also demonstrate the importance of employing a developmental perspective in clinical work and research on PTSD.

The handbook covers a breadth of topics related to trauma and PTSD in children and adolescents. The overall organization of the book helps the reader to move fluidly through topics in a logical order, with occasional

jumps in focus (e.g., a chapter on PTSD and law in the midst of chapters focusing on etiology and risk factors). Chapters on assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and clinical cases compliment each other very well. The book concludes with a chapter of PTSD in “Children and Adolescents Following War.” While a focus on responses to war is timely and important, it is curious that chapters did not address other categories of stressors specifically, such as abuse or community violence. Though individual chapters (e.g., on assessment and diagnosis) include discussion of a range of stressors (e.g., abuse, war, natural disasters, medical illness), specific reviews of topics central to particular stressors may provide in-depth information that would be useful for clinicians (e.g., a chapter focused on outcomes associated with child abuse).

Throughout the handbook, Silva and several contributors mention the relevance of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center to clinical work and research on PTSD. Data on children who experienced trauma related to that event would seem to provide valuable additional knowledge to the field. Unfortunately, with the exception of some anecdotal mention of the event, this edition of the handbook did not include much empirical data examining the effect of the disaster on children’s PTSD levels. We look forward to inclusion of such findings in future editions.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Handbook is sure to be a valuable resource for clinicians working with children and adolescents exposed to trauma. The handbook’s breadth allows for the introduction of a wide range of research. While chapters vary in the depth with which they discuss research, the book is sure to provide a valuable starting place for those seeking to learn more about PTSD in children and adolescents. The handbook nicely demarcates where we are as a field in studying child and adolescent PTSD and where we need to go in order to better understand and help youth exposed to trauma.

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