

## Reviews

**Living and Working with Schizophrenia.** By M. V. Seeman *et al.* Open University Press. 1982. Pp 146. £4.95.

This book is written for patients, relatives and other lay people. Within a compass of 124 pages, it successfully achieves its main aims: information about the nature of schizophrenia, treatments available, prognosis, and practical advice on coping. Nothing is taken for granted, and there is even a section on hospital procedures with an explanation as to why physical examination and investigations are performed.

It is an honest monograph which does not conceal the suffering experienced by both patients and relatives, and yet conveys a hopeful message that problems, including disturbed behaviour, can be minimized or avoided with a mixture of patience, firmness and controlled activities. It is strong on practical advice. The authors rightly emphasize the importance of self-help groups. There are some excellent brief accounts of their experiences by patients and relatives. One of the authors, a psychiatrist, contributes a *mea culpa* section.

The book is directed at a Canadian audience. Overall this should not cause any problem to readers and a preface by a British psychiatrist, Dr R. Cochrane, outlines where customs differ, particularly in respect of compulsory admission. Unfortunately, the 11-page appendix gives names and addresses of local self-help groups in Canada, USA, Australia, Eire, etc, but only the head office address of the UK National Schizophrenia Fellowship. More detailed information would have been helpful. This is a blemish in a book I can otherwise recommend. The only comparable book, by Professor Tsuang (*Schizophrenia: The Facts*, Oxford University Press, 1982), is also excellent, but requires a higher level of understanding.

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**People First—Developing Services in the Community for People with Mental Handicap: A Review of Recent Literature.** By Linda Ward. King's Fund Project Paper No 37. King's Fund Centre. 1982. Pp 160. £5.

As the subsidiary titles explain, this project paper is about services in the community for people with mental handicap, and it does not attempt to deal with specialized hospital pro-

vision. The book is compiled from the author's selection out of some 1,000 books, reports, articles and letters printed since 1975. The selection has a strong establishment bias and quotes official reports (Court, Jay, Warnock, etc), but says little about the discussions following the reports, although occasionally reference is made to critical comment.

The purpose of this review is to outline new developments so that lessons learned in one part of the country may benefit people elsewhere. This is very commendable and a great many developments are dealt with, but the result is a rather uneven publication where some pages consist of one-sentence lists of schemes while other single projects have half a page, as does the paragraph on the 'five hundred or so Gateway Clubs'.

After the first two introductory chapters the next six deal chronologically, like Shakespeare's seven ages of man, from infancy through pre-school, school age, adolescence and adulthood to old age, with 'the lover' only omitted. Throughout these chapters one is repeatedly reminded of the need to relieve the stress in the families by the provision of day centres, group homes, hostels, holiday homes, etc. Chapter 9 deals with the various professionals involved in treating and caring for the mentally handicapped in the community, with particular reference to the health visitor, the social worker and the community nurse. The roles of these and other professionals are briefly touched on, as well as the way in which it is thought they should respond to the community development of services.

Throughout the book the mentally handicapped tend to be thought of as a homogeneous group separated by age bands, and although Down's Syndrome has separate mention, there is little reference to the 5–10 per cent who are so far below the norms in terms of handicap and behaviour that they require more specialized care.

At the end there is a plea for careful monitoring and evaluation of the huge variety of projects outlined, and it may take years before one is able to say to what extent any of the innovations can replace, or only augment, the care and training given by the specialized institutions.

The Appendices give a useful list of names and addresses of relevant organizations, and a bibliography of the references.

In summary, this is a rather uncritical reference book, in which by judicious use of the index and bibliography the reader can get to the source of additional information on the topic selected.

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