

indeed the basis for its argument is that a psychodynamic formulation is necessary to get beyond simple statistical estimators of suicide probability. It is a clinical rather than a research text, so no evidence is given to support this claim. Although this might seem a major omission, since the book does not set out to be a research text, it cannot be too heavily criticized on these grounds. The detailed assessments given in the appendix are likely to be useful clinical instruments in any event.

Many of the concepts are easily translatable into cognitive and behavioural terms both in the content of the concepts (e.g. aloneness, self-hatred, and murderous rage), and in terms of the processes assumed to lead to suicide risk. For example, the author speaks of the development of 'mental structures' (lasting capacities for self-regulation which will act to sustain the person in the face of withdrawal of external support). The book also includes a wide range of findings (e.g. on 'hopelessness') which do not arise from the psychodynamic literature. In summary the author is an experienced clinician and within his own remit has successfully accomplished the difficult job of making his clinical experience available to others.

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Investigating Abnormal Behaviour. By E. Miller & S. Morley. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1986. Pp. 345. Cased, £20.00; paper, £9.95.

Psychology textbooks often fail to convey the sense of direction and purpose underlying psychological research, or the rationale of the methods used. This book does not. The authors reject structuring the book by *clinical conditions* or *psychological processes*, and instead emphasize the *questions* that arise in abnormal psychology, and the evidence for providing answers. The approach works well, and the frequent sterility of a 'methods course' is avoided by many concrete examples. Topics include the problem of description and classification, the role of parallel sciences such as epidemiology, genetics and biochemistry, the concept of psychological models and the importance of life-events. Half the book is devoted to treatment, considering types of therapy, evaluation of effectiveness in single patients and groups, and the mechanisms of action. Finally there are chapters on headache and mental handicap which do not fit well into the book. It is well referenced, with over a third of the citations from 1980 or after. The book is excellent and can be recommended to anyone wishing to explore the field.

However, the book does not always succeed. The purpose of references are sometimes unclear. Introductory books require some commitment if students are not to reject the entire discipline as without substance. When commitment does appear, as in the designation of ECT as 'purely empirical . . . for which no rationale can be offered', one suspects the otherwise well-read authors of ignoring recent work on neurotransmitter modification. Finally it is annoying to find 'medical' placed in inverted commas. Since I presume we would feel insulted if medical textbooks continually referred to "'psychological' approaches", then I see little justification for this.

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Biofeedback and Related Therapies in Clinical Practice. By D. Marcer. London: Croom Helm. 1986. Pp. 271. Cased, £22.50; paper, £10.95.

This book is aimed at professionals and students working clinically in specialist medical settings such as physical rehabilitation. The biofeedback applications covered include hypertension, Raynaud's Disease, cardiac arrhythmias, headache, stroke rehabilitation, spasmodic torticollis, writer's cramp, blepharospasm, incontinence and vaginismus.

The first part of the book outlines the general background to biofeedback, with a very basic introduction to the relationship between stress and illness, a discussion of biofeedback in the context of relaxation procedures in general and a guide to the more important issues relating to biofeedback research and evaluation. The second part is then concerned with the clinical applications of biofeedback, in each case giving a brief rationale for the biofeedback application, a summary of the research findings, and an impartial evaluation of biofeedback in each field of application. This book is not intended to be a detailed guide to biofeedback practice, nor an in-depth critique of biofeedback theory and research. It is a well-written and acceptable introductory text for medical, nursing,