

BOOK REVIEW

Parenthood and mental health: A bridge between infant and adult psychiatry

Sam Tyano, Miri Keren, Helen Herrman, & John Cox (Eds.)

Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

484 pp., £59.99 (Hardcover)

ISBN 978-0-470-74722-3

'Intrauterine life and infancy are very much more in continuity than the sharp break of delivery make us think' (Freud). Tyano, Keren, Herrman and Cox have edited a selection of evidenced-based research and theory on pregnancy, infant development and parenting that goes a long way towards supporting this point. The book offers a thorough account of the biological, social and psychological risk and protective factors which interplay between infant and adult psychiatry across cultures. The list of international contributors with backgrounds in Neuroscience, Psychology, Family Services and Psychiatry helps the reader to reflect systemically on a wide range of topics including: parent mental health, expectations of the foetus, pregnancy profiles, impact of method of conception, environment, bonding, attachment, parental substance use and medication, family structure, neglect, disability, illness and parenting techniques. The editors make a real point of including in the picture fathers, who are all too often overlooked, and of encouraging the reader to consider ethical issues such as 'Does a foetus have human rights?'

Each chapter is conveniently structured and grounded with case vignettes, discussions and implications for future research and service delivery. At times there is some repetition as main theories are described for the purpose of each topic but this is only apparent if reading the book cover to cover, which most readers are unlikely to do. There is sufficient psychological theory to explain important inner-processes and dynamics that are highlighted in research; however, it might have been useful to have more evidence-based interventions and their mechanisms explained thoroughly.

The research and theory discussed in this book will prove useful in assessment, formulation and intervention plans. Possibly of most importance is the potential to use this comprehensive and collaborated information in service planning: to identify adults and infants at risk in order to provide early intervention and preventative work. These are key themes in many current policies.

Overall, this offers a comprehensive, evidence-based, holistic perspective on a crucial time in infant and adult life which could easily be a key text for any mental health professional working in child and family or adult services.

JADE SMITH

*Clinical Psychologist
East Riding CAMHS
Leeds, UK*

E-mail: Jade.Smith@humber.nhs.uk