Pocket Guide for the Assessment and Treatment of Eating Disorders

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This text is written for and by psychiatrists in the main, all of the authors being based in California. However, if you are searching for an excellent summary text offering vital diagnostic information and treatment options then this is your text in a nutshell, as these contributors are all well positioned to provide that. Having said that, I was pleased to see the first three words of the foreword are "*Providing care for…*", since people experiencing eating disorders will almost certainly need long term and complex care by a multidisciplinary team. So, whilst the language and the approach are medicalised and may, at times, appear to be in conflict with a person-centred approach, the book provides an evidence-based and comprehensive mini-text which forms a very useful foundation for the knowledge required to care for this population.

I would suggest that some of the directness of this text is due to its concise and condensed approach to the subject matter; it is called a "pocket" guide and it did, indeed, slide neatly into my back pocket. Hence, multiple perspectives, whether they be alternative clinical perspectives, international or cultural positions on the assessment and treatment of eating disorders, are lacking: a "Californian lens" is adopted throughout.

A standard model is adopted for each of the seven chapters, using 14 pre-set headings, starting with introduction and diagnostic checklist, and finishing with common outcomes and complications, further reading and references. This makes for easy navigation through the essential information. "The basics" chapter is followed by the remaining six chapters, each related to a diagnostic label, for example, "Anorexia Nervosa", "Binge-Eating Disorder", etc.

It would be very easy to find fault with such a concise text, in terms of what is NOT included. My initial impression was that this book lacked the therapeutic and person-centred focus that would enable me to care for (i.e. nurse) individuals of all ages who experienced eating disorder. BUT, this text still has a huge amount of utility. Readers need to be mindful that there are pointers to additional and further reading, and that some clinicians working in this field, for example, dieticians, family therapists and, to an extent, nurses, may initially feel poorly served by this book. As a nurse and psychotherapist, I would suggest that you suspend your disbelief, and be more "solution-focussed", appreciating the high level of intelligence contained within its pages.

If we are to work respectfully and reciprocally across disciplines then clinicians of all kinds need to get a grip on the essential information contained in this easy-to-read and concise text.

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