Book Reviews

Sensitivity to the social and emotional needs of children and young people, in all their diversity, is the first theme that runs through the book reviews for this issue. The second theme is the value of honest, person-centred relationships at home and in educational settings.

The book by Long and Evans (2020) is highly topical during the period of lockdown/quarantine imposed on families following the COVID-19 pandemic. It will resonate with all those parents/caregivers who have found themselves obliged to do home-schooling for their children, whether they have the aptitude or time for this or not. The authors emphasise the importance of structured frameworks to ensure children's safety and sense of belonging, and to allay their understandable fears and anxieties about the pandemic. To this end, they provide a wealth of creative and imaginative activities for parents/caregivers to engage with. They are also aware of the challenges facing parents/caregivers of children with special needs.

O'Toole and Hayes (2020) draw on a wide range of theoretical frameworks to justify the use of different interventions to facilitate positive behaviour in primary and nursery schools. Each approach is illustrated with case studies and examples of good practice. The reader is also invited to carry out tasks and to reflect on issues that arise. The focus of this readable book is on children's strengths and their capacity for resilience. Brown, Desai and Elliott (2020) target those who work with students in higher education and propose a new model of supervision that focuses on diversity and inclusion on campus. Their approach emphasises the crucial importance of *identity-conscious supervision*, which takes account of students' ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or religious belief. Central to the approach is a concern for building authentic relationships with students, grounded in trust and a deep commitment to students' sense of self and identity. The authors also recognise the need for change at institutional level as universities become increasingly diverse. Their model addresses issues around conflict which almost inevitably arises in contexts where people's values and experiences differ or even clash. In this book, as in Brown et al. (2020), the reader is invited to reflect on case studies and consider challenging situations that arise.

Bond (2020) documents a personal and highly emotional account of one mother's reaction over time to her daughter's decision to make the transition from female to male. On reading the book, as well as the review by Karen Buckley, I reflected that access to the wise counsel of the previous three books in this set of reviews would have greatly alleviated much of the distress and turbulence in the relationship between this mother and her developing child.

Helen Cowie
Reviews Editor

1. *Supporting Children at Home.*

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This Kindle book arrived just as lockdown began due to COVID-19 across the world. The authors provided a wealth of ideas based on their combined and extensive experience of working with parents/caregivers and children. For parents and caregivers, this period of lockdown was an opportunity to strengthen their relationship with their children because of the time that they could now spend together, but difficulties also emerged, as the authors anticipated.

Concerned about the impact that this situation might have on children's mental health, Rob Long and Kathy Evans (2020) devised additional resources for parents/caregivers of children with special needs, including children with Down syndrome, autism, ADHD, those on the Asperger's spectrum, those with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, those with Tourette's syndrome, and other emotional, cognitive and behavioural difficulties. The authors are also sensitive to the fact that some parents/caregivers are living in difficult circumstances, with acute worries about employment, housing and finance. For some families, lockdown brought darker experiences, including conflict, anger, frustration and fear. Family doctors reported an epidemic of despair among their patients, indicated by panic attacks, sleeplessness, suicidal thoughts, alcohol-induced injuries and assaults.

The authors acknowledge the challenge facing parents/caregivers and emphasise the necessity to ensure that two fundamental needs are met: the *need to feel safe* and the *need to belong*. The presence of constant distressing news about the COVID-19 pandemic on the media has the potential to threaten children's need to be safe. Children cannot be shielded from the negative information that comes out daily, but they need reassurance and comfort as well as honest, age-appropriate information about the danger posed by the pandemic. Difficulties for children include uncertainty about the disease, the fear of becoming ill or seeing a family member suffer, the loss of the rhythms of everyday routines, the difficulty involved in connecting with other people that are usually close to them, and the absence of schooling. Each one of these factors can pose a risk to the mental health of children and their families. To facilitate children's sense of safety and connectedness, Long and Evans (2020) devised a supportive framework within which parents/caregivers might structure the days with their children:

- **Setting routines**: regular times for getting up and going to bed help to structure the day, as do mealtimes and set times for schoolwork and play;

- **Making memories**: creating opportunities to discuss the good news and the positive things that the family did during lockdown; keeping a diary, displaying photographs and artwork; telling stories about enjoyable activities that the family did during lockdown;

- **Having fun**: doing simple things, such as cooking together, playing board games together, doing crafts and drawing, making or playing music together, reading and writing stories; growing herbs, whether indoors or in the garden; going out to eat (at home) and dressing up for the occasion; keeping fit;

- **Using social media**: playing online games with friends; chatting with friends; arranging online parties for a special occasion; it is also important for parents/caregivers to be aware of the possible online risks to children and to keep a watchful eye on such risks as exposure to adult material, being groomed by adults posing as children being cyberbullied by peers.

- **Dealing with conflict within the family**: inevitably when people are spending long periods of time together without the usual routines of school, social life and friends, conflicts can arise. Parents/caregivers need to remain calm and to develop mediating strategies to defuse arguments and disagreements between family members.

- **Managing anxiety**: understandably, children are anxious during the COVID-19 pandemic, so parents/caregivers have a key role in listening with understanding to their children's fears about the disease and reassuring them by taking their worries seriously and answering their questions with understanding and empathy; strategies for reducing tension can include relaxation techniques, guided imagery, breathing exercises and workouts.

- **Building self-esteem:** it is very important for parents/caregivers to take time to build up the child's sense of worth by doing creative projects together, by talking to their children about their interests, their dreams for the future, their experiences of friendship, and praising them for what they have achieved. It is also useful for parents/caregivers to be consistent in their use of positive thinking about the child's talents and abilities.

The value of interventions like this guide is confirmed by preliminary research inviting children and young people themselves to suggest what is most helpful to them during these difficult times. Typically, the young people affirm the need for structure in their days and the positive value of regular physical activity, staying connected with friends and family, being in the open air in nature, experiencing a safe environment, taking up new hobbies and engaging creatively in stories, drama, art, crafts and music-making.

This Kindle book will continue to be useful to parents/caregivers even once the threat of the pandemic is over. It is very reasonably priced and all profits go to the UK National Health Service. I thoroughly recommend it.

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2. *Supporting Positive Behaviour in Early Childhood Settings and Primary School: Relationships, Reciprocity and Reflection*

The book consists of 10 chapters, reference list and index. The first chapter *Deconstructing authority, control and discipline* is actually the introduction to the topic. Important theories which will be the basis for the analysis, case studies and questions for reflection have been mentioned (Bandura, Bronfenbrenner, Attachment Theory and others) as well as famous experiments in psychology which demonstrate how negative behaviour could be easily learned, for example, the Stanford Prison Experiments and Milgram experiments. This is just to remind us (educators) that we should support positive behaviour in early childhood settings and primary schools. Besides theories, authors rely on evidence and practice to show us the way.

The second chapter *An authoritative approach to promoting positive behaviour* presents Diana Baumrind's concept of authoritative parenting applied to the educational setting. The authors emphasize that 'a child's world needs to be stable, consistent and predictable' (p 15) and that both support and structure are important. There are examples of inappropriate behaviour which have different backgrounds and could not be treated in the same way. Teachers have to be sensitive to the needs of the child and find out the causes of the child's behaviour.

The third chapter *Behaviourist perspectives and strategies for positive behaviour* gives as a glance through behaviourist learning theories (Pavlov, Watson, Skinner) and Bandura's social learning theory. It raises ethical concerns about behaviourism, due to removing intrinsic motivation and emotion from behaviour. There are also suggestions about how to apply behaviourism in practice (token economies, behaviour contracts etc.).

Chapter 4, *Psychodynamic and relational perspectives and strategies for positive behaviour*. In this chapter, psychoanalysis (Freud) and Attachment Theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth, Main and Solomon) serve as a basis for the explanation of the impact of early influences on later experiences in life. Ryle and Kerr propose Cognitive Analytic Therapy to support the idea of the *reciprocal role*. Relational approaches are oriented to security (secure base in an educational setting) for children. The importance of play, emotional expression and emotional literacy is also explained.

Chapter 5 *Humanist perspectives and strategies for positive behaviour*. Here Rogers' person-centred approach proposes a humanist perspective in educational settings. Empathy, congruence and unconditional

positive regard are core conditions. Narrative practice and peer mediation have been explained and offer us methods which promote respectful relationships between pupils and educators.

Chapter 6 *The biological bases of behaviour* refers to Thomas and Chess, Vygotsky, Montessori, Piaget, Froebel, Mc Millan, Engel, O'Brian, Cooper and some others. A child could react negatively for several reasons: hunger, lack of sleep, difficult temperament, need for movement. The authors suggest a biopsychosocial approach. Besides biology, social and psychological factors are important in understanding the child's behaviour.

Chapter 7 *Behaviour in context*: *Bioecological theory and the web of development*. This chapter refers mainly to the theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner. Educators are encouraged to use his Process-Person-Context-Time framework. The Reggio Emilia model of early education is mentioned as a good example of a quality learning environment. The authors point out the importance for educators to develop an environment which promotes positive learning and behavioural dispositions in children.

Chapter 8 *An intercultural perspective on behaviour*. The theoretical bases for this chapter are Vygotski's Sociocultural theory and Bourdieu's Theories of cultural capital and social and cultural reproduction. It is obvious that the social and cultural background of the child impacts his/her behaviour. The advice for educators is to respect differences and create supportive educational setting for each child.

Chapter 9 *Combining theoretical approaches*: *The example of bullying*. Definitions and types of bullying have been presented, as well as basic findings from Dan Olweus' research. It has been shown that educators could approach bullying in various ways. Earlier mentioned theories could have application in the prevention and treatment of bullying. A whole school approach is highly recommended, no matter which theoretical approach we use.

The final chapter (10), *Reflecting on positive approaches to engaging with children's behaviour,* is a summary of theoretical perspectives presented in the book. In conclusion, the authors hope they have encouraged the reader to reflect on various theoretical perspectives and practical approaches in order to draw their own conclusions. The reader is invited in the final task (p 152) to reflect on what will be done in the future to support positive behaviour in his/her educational setting.

As we can see from the titles of the chapters, the book covers a wide range of perspectives, combines different theoretical approaches and offers positive approaches for engaging with children's behaviour in early childhood and primary settings. It is easy to read, simple and practical. It is a kind of repetition of basic theories of child development and learning. The theories are well known and although they lead to practical advice for educators, they might be surplus for those who are familiar with them and/or are more experienced in practice. Therefore we recommend the book for beginners in the field, both students and kindergarten and primary school educators.

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3. *Identity-conscious supervision in student affairs: Building relationships and transforming systems*

This is a book launching a new model of supervision in student affairs which the authors name *identity-conscious supervision model.* It is a longed for guide for present and future supervisors, trying to fill a gap in the relative literature.

The book addresses issues facing students from diverse populations. As Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington states in his foreword, the challenge for present day campuses is to meet the needs and support the development of ever-growing diverse populations in oppressive campus and workplace environments.

Everyone who has been a student in one of the North European or North American universities has had the experience of different student affairs services. Being an international student in a New England university in the US or in Canada back in the 1960s or 1970s one could realize that powerful hidden biases perpetuated dominant norms in organizational dynamics. It is questionable if and what kind of supervision the student affairs staff received at the time.

Supervision of people engaged in student affairs has become mandatory in our days in order to face and address the dynamics that are present in diversity and inclusion on any campus. At present, in the multicultural societies in which we live, student affairs services are faced with diversity and need to reach out to embrace it by valuing the individual.

Why is supervision of student affairs professionals important? Effective supervision is essential to the development of new professionals. It prevents low morale and performance, as well as attrition. Professionals report that they have left the field because they became disillusioned about the purposes of student affairs (Winston & Creamer, 1997)

Supervision is relational but also intentional in order to achieve success. The authors keep reminding us that "relationship matters". They propose a synergistic supervision model which calls for a cooperative effort between supervisor and supervisee, characterized by a two-way communication, leading to a better effect due to their joint contribution. Supervisors need to provide support, intentional and constructive supervision and a purposeful professional development programs.

As stated by Shruti Desai in her introductory chapter, "we need to construct a supervision practice that provides holistic and intentionally identity-conscious approaches so we can build competencies around it, assess it, and institutionalize it". (p.6)

The authors advocate an identity-conscious approach to supervision contrary to an identity-neutral approach. An identity-neutral approach to supervision perpetuates biases some people already face. In identity-conscious supervision, supervisors create individualized methods of supervision taking into consideration aspects identifying the supervisee, such as race, gender, identity, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion.

In their Identity-Conscious Supervision Model the authors include nine core supervision strategies grouped under three levels of action: individual, supervision and organizational action level, which also define the three parts of the book. The first part focuses on issues relating to developing and building relationships with self and others; the second part centers on the supervisory relationship by advocating a synergistic approach to supervision, which helps satisfy the third goal of identity-conscious practice developed in the third part of the book, that of changing systems of dominance and inequity on campus through reorganization.

More specifically, Part 1, entitled action at the individual level, stresses the importance of a deep understanding of self which will help develop genuine relationships with others, based on trust, effective communication and partnership. Since there exists a barrier differential between supervisors and supervisees, issues of power do exist. However, it depends on the supervisor on how to utilize it effectively and positively by providing opportunities to neutralize it, such as by creating mutual and trusting relationships, a supervisory working alliance, as the authors name it. Acting with courage is also very important since student campuses are multicultural and systems of oppression exist. Courage requires coalition building and clarity of values. It means a willingness to take risks to stand for something; it means resilience.

Action at the Supervision level, in Part 2 of the book, moves a step further by fostering identity exploration, engaging with conflict and balancing expectations with identity in the supervisor's relationship with the supervisee. These components require dyadic skill-building within the supervisory relationship offering strategies that invite dialogue, acknowledge defensiveness and deepen relationships. Given the status differential among supervisors and supervisees, leadership is inevitable. The authors talk about a critical authentic leadership fostering the development of authenticity in supervisees centering on efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. The authors talk about the "racial battle fatigue" referring to the psychological, physiological and behavioral stress response coming from perpetually fighting and coping with racism. Conflict is bound to emerge in multicultural campuses and needs to be managed. Supervisors need to develop their skills and capacity to effectively engage and reconcile conflict focusing on positive aspects of conflict which can create space for the people involved to feel valued and respected.

Action at the Organizational level, in Part 3, addresses the power of identity-conscious supervisors to influence institutional change relying on the work done at the individual and the supervision levels. As the authors state: "a supervisor cannot influence institutional change without a strong relationship with self or

engaging with conflict" (p.16). Supervisors committed to social change of the organizational culture must be in a continual process of moving from knowledge and awareness to application.

In this book the authors do not only try to embrace all issues involved in supervision but they go one step further to guide the reader in how to apply the different concepts in practice by providing specific examples. Each chapter of the book is followed by a case study the reader is asked to reflect on, by answering some questions following it. The examples used to support the authors' beliefs, try to bring up the importance of different identities encountered in the student population. At the same time the questions are food for thought and discussion in an effort to overcome difficulties encountered due to different identities both of supervisors and supervisees.

It is a well written book with a personal touch. The authors liven the text with personal self-revealing accounts. Self-reflection is stressed throughout. It is a useful guide for people involved in student affairs and beyond. Supervisors and supervisees in different contexts can benefit greatly from this book, as it addresses issues encountered in every helping profession. Supervision is one of the biggest challenges faced by educators in preparing future professionals. Making a quick comparison with supervision at clinical settings, one can see many similarities which could make this book useful to counsellors and psychotherapists as well.

This book is an answer to the concern expressed a few years earlier by Davis Barham and Winston (2006) that "staff supervision activities should include a comprehensive model of supervision that can help practitioners break out of the mode of supervising by imitation, that is, uncritically and theoretically supervising as they have been supervised" (p.86).

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4. *Trans…What??????*

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Publisher:	**Self-published through Amazon**
Year of Publication:	**2020**
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Currently there is a strong and sometimes vitriolic debate about transgender issues, but very rarely do we read about the perspective of a parent whose child has made the transition. *Trans…What??????,* the first book written by self-published author Dee Dee Bond, is a raw, brave and deeply honest account of the author's struggle to accept her daughter's transition from female to male.

The book begins with Bond's memories of giving birth to a much loved baby girl, named Rosie, whom she enjoys dressing in pink. By primary school, however, Rosie, has a range of 'insecurities'; she is quiet, withdrawn, bullied at school, deeply unhappy, and begins self-harming. Bond puts this down to a range of difficulties and losses her daughter and the rest of the family experienced during Rosie's early childhood.

By Rosie's teenage years, however, Bond is happy and relieved; she feels her daughter has developed into an attractive, feminine girl, who loves 'pretty underwear' and perfume and shows a growing interest in boys and they in her.

It is soon after this that the book starts charting Bond's painful journey, from the point when sixteen-year-old Rosie asks her mother if it is ok to 'fancy' girls as well as boys.

Bond writes in a deeply reflective way about her angry response to this question, which she felt was due to her own negative experiences whilst at school and afterwards. She goes on to record the whole gamut of her reactions and emotions over the next two years as Rosie starts to develop her own non-feminine identity, a new reality that Bond and other members of the family have trouble coming to terms with.

Bond struggles to deal with the feeling that this was not how she had envisaged her daughter's future. She found she could accept and care for Rosie's new friends, many of whom were young people who refused to be defined by gender, and Bond had no problem with Rosie's friends having same sex relationships. But that was because none of the young people were her daughter. Her denial of her daughter being anything but a straight (cis) female continued even when her daughter cut off her 'beautiful' long hair and joined a local young people's LGBTQ+ group; she persuaded herself that Rosie was joining it in order to support her new friends.

When Rosie sent her mother a text (from another room in the house) saying she was transgender - a concept her mother had only heard of a short time before - and wanted to be identified as male, Bond's emotional and physical reactions were severe. She experienced a powerful sense of loss as well as an irrational fearthat her daughter was inhabited by another male being. Over the next few months, the relationship between

the mother and daughter was fraught with furious rows, as well as Bond's denials of the new situation and her reactions of grief.

Throughout the following months, Bond tried to process her confused emotions. It would be ok if Rosie was gay or bi-sexual as 'Rosie would still be Rosie; not someone else'. But had Rosie rejected and thrown away seventeen years of their shared life as mother and daughter? Was she a terrible failure as a mother? And how would Bond's own deeply loved mother respond to her granddaughter's transition?

Despite continued pain, because Rosie was so strong and utterly determined to transition to be the person she felt born to be, Bond gradually moved to a greater acceptance and understanding of her new son, William.

The book ends on a positive note, with Bond listing what she feels she has learned on this painful journey and what she hopes that William, has learned.

This book is a valuable addition to understanding the powerful emotions experienced by young and older people as they go through the process of transitioning, as well as the reactions of their families and friends, and the wider community. It is also a guide for therapists and other professionals wanting to support them.

An account written by William would be a wonderful accompaniment to this insightful book.

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