

BOOK REVIEW

ELLIS, A., MCINERNEY, J. F., DIGIUSEPPE, R., & YEAGER, R. J. *Rational-Emotive Therapy with Alcoholics and Substance Abusers*. Pergamon Press, 1988. Pp. viii + 161.

This book, part of a series of *Psychology Practitioner Guidebooks*, provides the reader with a thorough introduction to the use of rational-emotive therapy (RET) with alcoholics and abusers of other drugs. For those familiar with RET and the work of Dr. Ellis, the simple logic of the therapeutic technique may induce a post-hoc conclusion that, had they only taken the time and effort, they could have themselves written many of the book's 12 chapters. The mark of the virtuoso in any field of endeavor is this ability to make the most difficult of tasks appear effortless to the audience. The authors of this book are to be commended for the clarity, organization, and style of the text. The basic principles of RET are followed by a discussion of the irrational beliefs that support alcohol and other forms of drug abuse. A chapter on general treatment considerations is followed by four chapters that provide concrete examples of the application of specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral techniques. The final three chapters discuss working with the enabler, employing RET in a therapeutic community, and using techniques to help therapists themselves survive their arduous task. Throughout the book, tables, charts, and lists are used in an effective manner to supplement the presentation of written material.

The authors have placed much emphasis upon the need to aggressively challenge the drug abuser's irrational belief that the discomforts of drug cessation and continued abstinence are simply too harsh to tolerate. It is, however, unfortunate that the authors do not address the fact that chronic consumption of some reinforcing drugs can lead to physical dependency. When sudden cessation of drug use leads to life-threatening withdrawal symptoms, therapists who pride themselves upon the rationality of their approach might want to consider the judicious use of pharmacological aids to detoxification. Even though the psychologists to whom this text is directed are not, at present, allowed to dispense psychoactive medication, individuals attempting to halt their drug use may be given one or more of a diverse pharmacopeia that includes methadone, naloxone, nicotine-containing chewing gum, antabuse, and clonidine, to name only a few. Whatever the psychologists's attitude towards these compounds, they are often a part of attempts to halt drug use. The utility of the text would have been greatly expanded if it had explored the identification and challenge of the therapist's and client's irrational beliefs about the mechanism of action and efficacy of these pharmacological aids to cessation.

Along with this absence of discussion of, at least, client and therapist *beliefs* about pharmacological aids to drug cessation, there is a failure

to discuss the implications of abuse of an illicit, versus a licit, drug. Without abandoning the goal of abstinence, the authors discuss the possibility that some drug users, particularly cigarette smokers and perhaps even a subset of alcoholics, may be best served by a goal of reduced use. Consistent with the wider application of the principles of RET, the authors emphasize the need to help the client "change some of their basic self-damning beliefs." Unfortunately, the authors do not consider the antitherapeutic effect of prohibitionist pronouncements that even casual use of presently illicit drugs renders one a subhuman coconspirator on the wrong side of the "War on Drugs." Supporters of a therapeutic technique that stresses self-acceptance as a necessary prerequisite for therapeutic advancement must address the negative consequences of a legal system that denigrates the basic humanity of users of illicit drugs.

Despite the absence of discussion of pharmacological aids to drug cessation/abstinence and a failure to discuss the unique challenges to self-esteem faced by those who have become abusers of presently illicit drugs, *Rational-Emotive Therapy with Alcoholics and Substance Abusers* provides the practitioner with a comprehensive introduction to therapeutic assumptions and methodologies. The book is a pleasure to read, and provides a powerful argument for the application of the principles of RET to the problems of alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse. (Arthur P. Leccese, Kenyon College)

BOOK NOTES

INTONS-PETERSON, M. J. *Gender Concepts of Swedish and American Youth*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988. Pp xiii + 262.

Intons-Peterson's *Gender Concepts of Swedish and American Youth* is a very thorough account of a comprehensive, cross-sectional study of gender concepts in Swedish vs. American children. The author informs us of the attempts by the Swedish government to legislate equality of opportunity for the sexes and suggests that this legislation should be related to more egalitarian conceptions of gender among Swedish youth compared to their counterparts in North America. Her study of gender conceptions is explained in great detail and the results provided lend support to her hypothesis. Intons-Peterson gives much attention to a discussion of cross-cultural research in the book, and she provides evidence of careful consideration of research issues involved in the study of gender conceptions as well. This book is quite valuable in