Book Reviews

Social Work in Mental Health: Trends and Issues, Uri Aviram (ed), The Haworth Press, Inc (1997), New York, ISBN: 0-7890-0383-X, 134 pp inc index, Price: US$24.

Social Work and Mental Health explores how social work academics and practitioners have responded to the challenge of providing adequate community services for mentally ill persons. It offers suggestions for supporting the recovery and empowerment process of mental health consumers and for developing programmes with a wide range of psychosocial, vocational and housing systems.

Issues related to social work and mental health, discussed at an International Conference in Jerusalem, were compiled in this book to capture major issues of concern to health and social work professionals. The articles contained in the book capture issues important in working with persons with severe mental illness and who may need institutionalisation, but where community care can also be a possibility. Suggestions are put across to social workers to help them maintain their social work ethics when working with mentally ill persons and their families. Social work practitioners are reminded of the legal requirements in dealing with individuals with psychiatric problems, as well as authentic policies that guide their practice.

Aviram discusses factors that have shaped and guided the social work profession to form a strong allegiance with psychiatry. It lays out trends that are of challenge to current social work practice. The author captures three major goals that societies attempt to achieve when providing psychiatric services in this section. He further discusses homelessness among psychiatric individuals and presents how researchers and professionals view psychological disabilities.

Deegan further discusses what happens when individuals lose power over their lives and how this is reclaimed through a psychotherapeutic orientation. The chapter further elaborates on how this reclaim is interpreted as empowerment.

Stuart discusses in another section why rehabilitation of persons with mental disabilities is not a complete process without including community care as a strategy for achieving independence. Institutional care which was criticised for its stereotyped activities became less favourable and gave way to community care which struck as a better way of providing an alternative method for treating mental illness.

One other area in psychiatry discussed by Lurie in this book relates to strategies for helping young adults with severe mental disorders. This may leave individuals emotionally, economically and socially disadvantaged. Helpful interventive measures to assist these young individuals are discussed in detail.

Segal, et al, presents the effects of psychological disability on social network,s whilst Hatfield (1997) discusses tension brought about in the family as a result of mental illness. The writers call for professional intervention to these problems.

Whilst Lightman presents suitable methods of social planning and community housing to assist individuals discharged from psychiatric institutions, Ronel suggests how self-help programmes can assist drug-dependent individuals to live independently.

The articles in the book have been designed on a manner that helps social workers understand where they fit into psychiatry as a discipline. It is certain to assist them in gaining confidence in exploring this area which does not normally feature as a priority in traditional social work. The articles also help student social workers and society to appreciate how social work interventive measures can alleviate problems encountered by the mentally ill. The information captured in the articles is sure to build trust and good relationships between medical and social work personnel.

Reviewed by Violet Matimba-Masuku, Lecturer, School of Social Work, Harare.

Cutting the Gordian Knot. The Benefits of Girls' Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ann Cotton & Richard Synge (eds), 25 Wordsworth Grove, Cambridge CB3 9HH, UK, ISBN: 0-9532907-0-0, Copies available from CamFed at £15 (Plus postage & packaging)

The need for sustained community-based action to reverse the high rate at which girls in sub-Saharan Africa drop out from school is underlined in a new book just published by the Cambridge Female Education Trust (CamFed) in association with the African Studies Centre, University of Cambridge. A compilation of papers presented to CamFed Seminars in Cambridge, Harare and Accra, the book is an important contribution on the widening international debate on girls' education.

Clare Short, the UK Secretary of State for International Development, applauds the editors' emphasis on the need for study of the problem to shift towards finding real solutions. In the book's Foreword, Ms Short calls for *"approaches and strategies which are both imaginative and realistic,"* saying that women and girls who fail to receive an education "are unable to develop their full talent and are locked into a position of powerlessness."

The book, *Cutting the Gordian Knot. The Benefits of Girls' Education in Sub-Saharan Africa,* edited by Ann Cotton and Richard Synge, analyses the reasons for the high drop-out rate of girls throughout sub-Saharan Africa and examines the strategies being formulated by governments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations to encourage more girls to stay at school.