to be extremely patient and tolerant, and able to identify emotionally with the clients' feelings; not something that everybody could or would want to do.

Jodie's relationship with Sandy improves dramatically, to the extent where the counsellor calls the client by her nickname, and the client talks openly about her teenage life. In working through her worries and hearing them echoed back, the idea is that Jodie now feels understood and able to move on. Bryant-Jefferies describes this as 'the development of a new configuration within Jodie's structure of self'. Quite what this means remains slightly ambiguous. This seems to me a rather turgid and verbose explanation for the client's natural development in response to a seemingly simplistic technique. A similar example of what could be termed 'counselling jargon' is seen in Nick's case, where we are told the counsellor should 'stay with the client's inner world'. Such comments are boxed and interspersed in the text, analysing the counsellor's approach and how this can help, assessing the client's reactions and thoughts, as a way of keeping the reader adrift in the flow of dialogue. Presumably this is intended to remind us of the technique being illustrated, as it would be quite easy to forget exactly what the counsellor is trying to do without these reminders. This is carried out also in the supervision sessions, with the boxed comments stressing the need to employ a PCA to the counsellor themselves in order to prepare them for their role and to help with their own issues. Is there a risk that a supervisor applying the same techniques on you that you have used on a client would somewhat undermine its chances of being helpful, in that you may be acutely aware of the approach being used? Clearly, the supervision sessions do help to emphasize the importance of counsellors themselves having somebody to listen and to share the burden with.

The dialogue-based style of this book will appeal to some and not others; it is very readable, and there are numerous comments on what is happening and why, but for anyone who prefers straightforward 'how-to' books, this one is not for you. The main strength of Bryant-Jefferies' presentation of the PCA is his use of

case studies; some may find these, along with the regular author's comments, a stimulating and informative read, whilst others may view the book as too long-winded and be left with little understanding of how successful PCA actually is, as the cases are fictitious. I think the book is better suited to trained counsellors exploring new techniques and approaches, and would be a good contribution to research. However, I do not think it is alone an adequate guide to the PCA for those unfamiliar with it. It is an interesting exploration of PCA practice, but perhaps more should be understood about the theory behind it before the book is consulted. It does, however, suggest very basic guidelines for teachers and others looking to employ the PCA.

The value of the PCA technique is, like most others, debatable and would not be favoured by everyone. While it is indeed important not to impose ideas on young people, sometimes more personal input from the counsellor can be helpful. As a young person with some experience of counselling myself, I would personally find PCA somewhat condescending – although the intention is the opposite – and frustratingly repetitive. However, *Counselling Young People* does give a broad outline of how the technique is applied and why it may be of use to involve young people in their own progress. If the fictitious stories of Jodie and Nick are to be believed, it certainly appears to be a useful and valuable approach for counsellors of young people. Perhaps it is simply a case of try it and see?

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Risk, Communication and Health Psychology

By Dianne C. Berry. Open University Press/McGraw-Hill Education, 2004, PB £19.99, 173pp. ISBN 0-335-21351-0

This book is one of the first to address the issue of communication of health risk in the context of a movement away from a paternalistic model of health-care in which doctors rarely

involved patients in decision-making. In order for patients to become more empowered and truly involved in their own health-care and health-care decision-making, one needs to understand clearly the issues involved and the method of communicating health risk.

Early chapters define and explain use of the term 'risk' in various disciplines, as well as how its meaning has changed over time, and how the public understands it. The chapter uses the example of the 1995 'pill scare' to realistically move the reader into this complex subject matter. This chapter provides an excellent and quite comprehensive view of the subject in a relatively short amount of space. Each sentence appears to be full of useful information for a variety of audiences. For doctors, nurses and other health-care providers who wish to be more effective in communicating risk to their patients in an effort to empower them and create partnerships with them this text provides an excellent guide. For the researcher who seeks to explore issues related to how risk should be ideally be communicated, this text provides an in-depth conceptual framework that surely will be utilized greatly in the future. For the medical educator and those who train nurses and other health-care professionals, this book may serve as an excellent text as well as a guide to the development of course material on health communication in general as well as risk communication specifically.

The second chapter is most useful in providing comprehensive operational definitions for risk. It further explains the concept of health risk

from a variety of perspectives including that of the public. Chapter 3 tackles the very difficult concept of communicating probabilities clearly, concisely, and with examples that may easily be used in the classroom as well as in patient education. It challenges the traditional approach of communicating percentages in an effort to assist patients to understand risk. Further, it presents ways to overcome these issues.

The remaining five chapters bring the reader through the concept of risk in a manner that is not only detailed and comprehensive, but builds on the previous chapters. These chapters cover the following topics: 'understanding and influencing people's health behaviour', 'communicating information about health and treatment', 'patient information leaflets and the provision of written information', 'other risk scales and tools for aiding understanding of health-related information'.

The author ends the book with a specific chapter entitled 'Conclusions and Future Challenges' which highlights among other issues the many ethical issues involved in risk communication. The author writes, 'Effective risk communication is crucial if we want to improve health'. All concerned with patient care will surely agree after a reading of this text that will become a reference for years to come.

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