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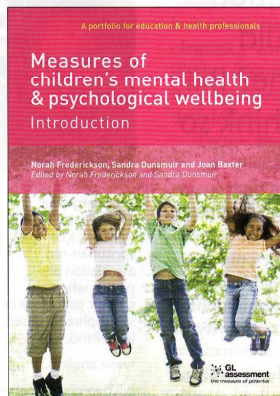
Resources

your guide to what's new

MEASURES OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING: A PORTFOLIO FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Edited by Norah Frederickson and Sandra Dunsmuir
GL Assessment 2009, ISBN 978 070871 910 7, £400

In the midst of mounting scrutiny about the effectiveness and cost of the various professional interventions that are being carried out in children's lives today, it is inevitable that greater efforts are being made to measure the progress and outcomes of these interventions.



This is an impressive production. It is not a book but rather a well packaged collection of seven, large booklets. Taken all together, they provide a remarkably comprehensive picture of children's mental health. The emphasis is firmly on the positive, not the pathological or problematic. There is just one on distress. The others focus on enjoyment, resilience, healthy living, belonging, responsiveness, and social behaviour.

The booklets summarise the major issues affecting these particular subjects well and then describe in detail various relevant inventories and measures. This is carried out in a clear and systematic way, each questionnaire being considered in terms of its purpose, administration, scoring, interpretation, technical details and comparison with similar measures. All in all, 42 questionnaires are covered in this way.

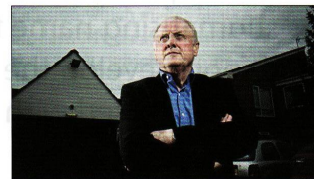
In many respects this is a modern venture. All but six of these questionnaires have appeared since the beginning of the 1990s. Most of the authors are psychologists and as such contribute a certain kind of scientific rigour and a professional experience of children in educational settings. Inevitably, issues arise as to reliability, validity and utility. The task of choosing which measure to address, and which question to ask in relation to which children – and in which context – is challenging. Some of course may say that the sheer complexity and subtlety of the varying states of mind of children elude measurement. This is a view not shared by the editors. It is clear that a great deal of thought has gone into designing these

various questionnaires – and having them all gathered in this one portfolio will be of considerable value to those interested in research and evaluation.

Rating: Worth dipping into
Peter Wilson, consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist

CAN GERRY ROBINSON FIX DEMENTIA CARE HOMES?

BBC and Open University co-production, shown on BBC2 in two parts in December 2009, available as a DVD from www.ouw.co.uk



It's a sign of how far television has been dumbed down when what should have been a serious exposé of the quality of care that people with dementia receive is turned into an ego-driven reality TV show where a multi-millionaire businessman was set the 'challenge' of transforming three rubbish care homes.

Such a format depends on making the care homes look as dreadful as possible to show the presenter in the best possible light.

The picture presented was, perhaps predictably, a depressing one. Running dementia care homes is a £6.5 billion industry with profit margins as high as 30%. With such easy money available, there's no shortage of the greedy and unscrupulous hungry for a slice of the action, leading to poorly trained, overworked, underpaid staff and dreadful standards of care.

The man sent in to sort out this mess, caused by ruthless cost-cutting profiteers with no experience of running care services, was Gerry Robinson, a ruthless cost-cutting profiteer with no experience of running care services. Surely it's people like him who are part of the problem, whereas the programme makers wanted us to believe they're part of the solution.

Although some good points were occasionally made, you couldn't help feeling that the residents were being made to look as pathetic and as pitiful as possible and that their plight was merely part of Gerry's challenge, rather than a national scandal that needed to be sorted out.

Uncomfortable and unsettling viewing, this was