Social Work and COVID-19: Lessons for education and practice
Denise Turner (ed.) *St. Albans, Critical Publishing, 2021, xiii+105, ISBN 978-1-913453-61-9 (pbk), £14.99*

By coincidence, I received this opportune book for review on the day I received a positive test result for COVID-19. Immediately, I felt a strange affinity with it and, experiencing only mild symptoms at the time, thought what better time to read and compose my review. Unfortunately, the symptoms developed, although thankfully only moderately, and the context of the review reflects my state of befuddled exhaustion and supine positionality. However, reading this timely volume of short responses to social work practice and education, from a diverse range of voices and actors, became more viscerally alive to me as a result.

In the foreword to Turner's book, Ruth Allen CEO of the British Association of Social Workers, adapts the commonly posed post-crisis question '*what did you do in the pandemic?*' to '*what did you learn in the pandemic/*'. A slight alteration and, of course, a hard question to answer, but one that reflects what this book is trying to do. It is also one which, in the main, the book succeeds in answering.

Its 11 chapters are wide-ranging in scope and focus, and also in terms of the authors and their backgrounds. It includes established academics, social workers in practice, student social workers, and people who use social work services. As a result the chapters are mixed in length and what they are adding to the debate. However, all chapters give voice and perspective to a strange and difficult time. There are common themes throughout the book that pivot on the speed at which social workers, students, educators and people using services have responded to exigencies of digital communication and the diminution of physical proximity in relationship building and maintenance. The positive aspects of the digital turn are balanced, however, with the recognition of increased digital poverty and the impacts this has on people's lives. Akin to this, there is a clear statement counteracting trite political platitudes and mnemonics such as 'we're all in this together'. Rather, there is exposure of the growing and continuing social and health-related inequalities, laid bare by the facts of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality data.

Chapters discuss important aspects of the digital turn, as this is something that has affected everyone during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to do so into the future. Whilst this move towards digital working is seen as generally positive, there is a drive to understand and counter the discrimination and oppression that stems from increased online communication alongside recognition of people's differing digital competences. The need for ethical digital practice is writ large through the chapters and is, as argued in chapter 1, an area that demands inclusion in the ever-expanding curriculum. Protecting privacy, dignity and ensuring safety require balance in child safeguarding and therapy, in working with asylum seekers, with students and their families and with people with disabilities, and those at the end of life. This has become urgent and vital in this time of pandemic and the experiences of the authors of this book illuminate important aspects if the pathway ahead.

Overall, this book presents a useful volume of first reflections on a time that will mark many people's lives. Deeper analytical work will follow, social work practice and education will change, and people will learn to be at ease with novel forms of distant

communication. But Turner's edited volume adds diverse and key voices to that beginning debate. It is well worth a read!

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