

**Social Work Practice: Integrating concepts, processes and skills (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)**

Marion Bogo

New York, Columbia University Press, 2018, pp xiv + 419, ISBN: 9780231186230 (pbk), £30

Social work practice is, in many ways, a traditional text book. On first sight, it is densely written and devoid of the interactive text boxes, activities and summaries we have grown accustomed to seeing in the modern text book for students. It is however a thoughtful consideration of some key concepts underpinning social work practice and engages the reader by offering considered and well thought through insights and evidence from which to consider the complexities of social work practice. As such, it is an engaging and thought-provoking read.

Divided into three parts, discussions and guidance focus on conceptual frameworks for social work practice (part one); the helping process in social work practice (part two); and the shortest section: interviewing in social work practice (part three). What is evident from each of these is that when so many books talk around the subject, Bogo, provides explicit, evidenced based step by step guides to engaging in direct practice. This book provides a particularly useful guide to students and practitioners wishing to break down and explore the social work client process and relationship. As Bogo herself states, the book 'provides an opportunity to re-examine contemporary social work theory and to review selected empirically based techniques, long standing practice principles and interviewing skills' (pxiii). The section on the helping process does this by providing well considered steps on preparing for, engaging, analysing and agreeing goals with the client. The section on interviewing explores each stage of the process including use of questions, seeking clarification, active listening and use of silence and setting goals.

Whilst the text focuses on a US model of clinical practice and is underpinned by the introduction of the 2015 Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the concepts and discussions are eminently transferable and applicable to a more global readership. None more so than the newly introduced (since the first edition of this book in 2006) focus on holistic competence and the interplay between professional knowledge and the use of self. The emphasis throughout the text on relationship based social work, at times appears incongruent with some of the current demands for more managerialist and neo-liberal models of social work practice which students and practitioners find themselves in. Exploration of the challenges of practising in the ways promoted within the text (building relationships over time, establishing and working toward agreed goals) are ones however that we should fight to maintain within contemporary social work practice. They are certainly congruent with the values of the profession and broader evidence

1 regarding what it is that improves outcomes for individuals and families. The models explored in  
2 the text are based on a long established body of work by the author on holistic practice. Exploring  
3 and reflecting on the challenges of putting these into practice would have been a welcome  
4 addition to the book. Whilst Bogo does consider obstacles and challenges, these mainly focus on  
5 the individual's resistance to change rather than system constraints, funding cuts and high  
6 workloads which provide significant obstacles and challenges within the UK.  
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13 Overall, the book provides a thoughtful and practical guide to implementing evidenced based  
14 processes within the social worker – service user relationship which will be of value to students  
15 and experienced social workers alike.  
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20 564 words  
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23 **Dr Mel Hughes**  
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