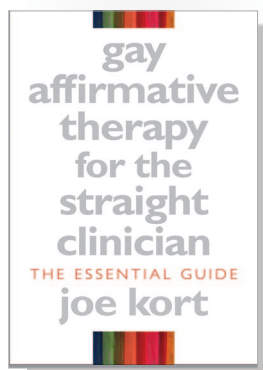


# Reviews



## Gay affirmative therapy for the straight clinician: the essential guide

Joe Kort

WW Norton & Company 2008

ISBN 978-0393704976

£19.99

This book, written in a highly accessible style, is suitable for both novice and experienced counsellors whose earlier training may have omitted lesbian and gay issues. It is essential reading for the straight therapist who has not explored his or her own prejudices and has little knowledge of the lesbian and gay world. The comprehensive text is broken into small sections which aid clarity on each page.

The author involves himself in the text as counsellor and supervisor and therapists are given specific suggestions on how they should treat their clients, illustrated with plenty of relevant case examples. Kort's interesting concept is that lesbian and gay people suffer not only from internalised homophobia, but actually from post-traumatic stress disorder rooted in their upbringing of 'covert cultural sexual abuse' and family disapproval.

He references Erikson's developmental model, but identifies 'developmental insults', and suggests a differential diagnosis using gay affirmative therapy principles for common mental health disorders.

As an American book the language sometimes arrests and there are some notable British names missing from the references (e.g. Davies and Neal). Kort surprisingly takes a polarised position on the gay/straight divide. 'Queer' is only briefly mentioned and without full explanation of its use in challenging binary notions of gender as well as sexuality. Bisexuality is scarcely mentioned, although some case examples would indicate bisexuality. Transgender issues are also deliberately missing. Gay parenting is omitted, but there are some useful sections on helping family adjustment when children come out.

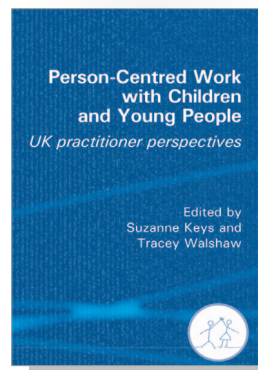
Couple counsellors will find two valuable chapters on counselling

lesbian and gay couples not found in many other texts. This includes counselling married couples where one partner is gay, or lesbian and gay couples where one has previously been in a heterosexual relationship, as well as other common difficulties in same-sex couple relationships.

Kort believes passionately in challenging ignorance and he insists that therapists must be 'gay-informed'. He has succeeded in providing readers with a good start by providing basic specific information needed to equip counsellors to work therapeutically with lesbian and gay clients. A comprehensive glossary covers language used in lesbian and gay cultures which is generally common across the American/British divide.

### **Margaret Evans**

BACP (Snr Accred) Sexual minority accredited therapist, supervisor and counselling lecturer



## Person-centred work with children and young people: UK practitioner perspectives

Suzanne Keys and Tracey Walshaw (eds)

PCCS 2008

ISBN 978-1906254018

£19

There are few books written specifically about working with children and young people from a person-centred perspective, making this text a particularly welcome resource. The book is co-edited by Tracey Walshaw and Suzanne Keys and consists of chapters written by 16 practitioners working in a range of different settings. There is much diversity between chapters and so the overall themes of the book will be commented upon here. What the chapters have in common is their demonstration of the passion and commitment of the contributors and their firm belief, grounded in their own experience, in the value and effectiveness of the person-centred way of working.

Some of the chapters focus on particular experiences of children and young people including sexuality, bereavement and adoption, whilst others focus on certain aspects of person-centred theory

and practice and links with other models including explorations of person-centred psychodrama, working at relational depth and attachment theory. Amongst the many themes explored in the book are those of self-disclosure, the role of humour, non-discriminatory practice and widening participation.

A number of the contributors have chosen to illustrate their practice by focussing on their work with one particular individual or group. The chapters demonstrate the two-way nature of the therapeutic process, whereby both therapist and client gain a great deal personally from their work together, highlighting the fundamentality of the relationship within person-centred work.



## Creative group supervision

Brigid Proctor and

Francesca Inskipp

University of Wales, Newport 2008

DVD

£60

Practitioners discuss frankly their own professional and personal development. The range of writing styles adds meaning to the book, enabling readers to get a very real sense of not only the unique nature of the therapeutic relationships discussed but also the very idiosyncratic nature of the practitioners themselves.

This meaningful and accessible text is recommended to anyone with an interest in person-centred theory and practice and in particular to those who may question the validity of its application to work with children and young people. It is invaluable to anyone currently working with this client group or with an interest in doing so and it is particularly of use to the increasing number of practitioners working in schools.

**Sara Bartlett Brown**  
Counsellor

Using two DVDs and an accompanying leaflet, Proctor and Inskipp present an informative and watchable presentation on group supervision. Experienced therapists act the roles of trainees working in an agency setting and demonstrate how a group can form and begin to present a casework. At regular stages the programme is cut to allow discussion between the authors and Mike Simmons of the University of Wales, reflecting on and providing clarification of the previous section.

The first disc illustrates the importance of 'getting the foundation right' as Proctor puts it. Ground rules (given to the supervisees prior to meeting) are clarified before a working agreement is drawn up. Proctor explains the latter is non-negotiable and influenced by factors such as training course requirements, ethics and frameworks of

good practice, whereas the ground rules relate to 'good manners' and refer to a particular group.

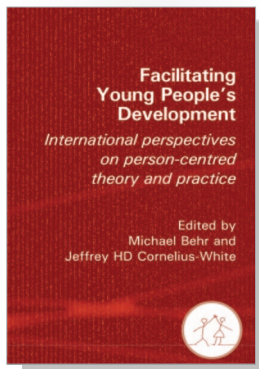
The second disc moves onto casework presentation. Four different exercises are shown – 'Noddy jackpot', 'the fish', 'the 5-eyed supervisor' and 'the sculpt' – and there is no doubt that watching these via a visual demonstration is much more effective than reading about them. Despite knowing that the presentations are amalgams of cases, I found them surprisingly convincing and often moving.

Any complaints are minor ones – a written outline of the difference between ground rules, working agreements and contracts would help, ideally with examples of the first two. Proctor's use of Russian dolls, although a helpful visual approach to define the various aspects within a working agreement, left me confused

somewhere between dolls four and six. But these are incidental niggles when set against the opportunity to watch Proctor and Inskipp work together, providing confirmation if needed of why they are held in such high regard.

Anyone in the counselling field, irrespective of therapeutic approach, and especially those who have not worked with Proctor and Inskipp, would benefit from watching them. This is a practical and inspiring programme.

**Angela Cooper**  
MBACP (Snr Accred)  
Supervisor (group and individual)



## Facilitating young people's development: international perspectives on person-centred theory and practice

Michael Behr and Jeffrey HD Cornelius-White (eds)

PCCS Books 2008

ISBN 978-1906254001

£19

This book brings together chapters from four continents exploring 'international, multi-context approaches to person-centred work with young people, including scientific evidence, case studies, practice descriptions and theoretical arguments and grounding'. That the contributions began as presentations from a symposium at the 2006 World Association for Person-Centred and Experiential Psychology and Counselling conference is reflected in the wide range and nature of materials presented. These are presented in a clear and logical structure comprising three main sections: 1) rationales for person-centred psychotherapy with children and adolescents; 2) new therapeutic methods with specific groups;

3) counselling, education and learning in schools. These sections are preceded by concise abstracts, and book ended by scene setting opening and concluding editorial chapters.

Presented here is a richly varied and stimulating mosaic of contemporary person-centred work with young people and others significant in their world. Within this, potentially controversial and uncomfortable questions are raised around the necessity and sufficiency of the core conditions. It is suggested, for example, that therapists may sometimes need to do something additional or specific in order for therapy to be effective – such as confronting violent young people about their behaviour. Some contributors

propose the person-centred approach needs to be flexible and can be extended to other work, including facilitating conflict resolution, improving communication, and helping build client skills and competencies.

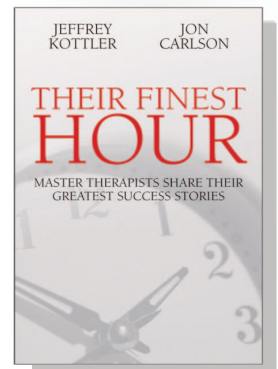
Whether or not we agree with all the propositions, the energy and enthusiasm with which they are presented here is freshly affirmative of the person-centred approach. For example, through simple, direct and sometimes poignant writing, Dorothea Husson asserts the absolute necessity of the person-centred relationship alongside differentiations she believes are important when working with children and adolescents traumatised by

experiences of sexual abuse.

Some contributors assume the reader possesses greater familiarity with research methodology and terminology than others, but further investigation into specific topics is facilitated by comprehensive reference lists at the end of each chapter, albeit with some references given in the original language and without translation.

In conclusion, this is a topical book in the current political climate of state regulation and evidence-based practice. As with the client in therapy, the reader will no doubt take what is useful to him or her from this stimulating collection and leave what is less so.

**Cath Fuller**  
Counsellor



Throughout the summer, this book lay on my coffee table and every time I had a few moments to spare I could dip in and enjoy it, one chapter at a time. By the end of August I had worked my way effortlessly through 27 real-life narratives of client/therapist relationships selected as outstanding by those who experienced them.

It would be impossible to summarise the content of these stories because they were all unique and idiosyncratic encounters, but what did strike me was how so many cases illustrated what I have always believed to be true – that when we stop theorising, diagnosing, interpreting and trying

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**New to purchase** – *Legal Resources for Counsellors and Psychotherapists book 2: Confidentiality & Record Keeping in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, by Tim Bond and Barbara Mitchels

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British Association for  
Counselling & Psychotherapy

## Their finest hour: master therapists share their greatest success stories

Jeffrey Kottler and Jon Carlson

Crown House Publishing 2008

ISBN 978-1845900885

£16.99

to be the expert, we do our best work.

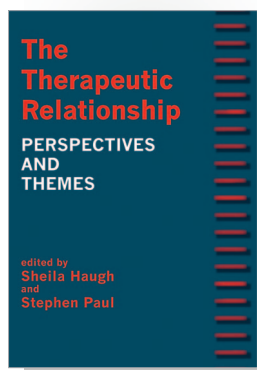
Time and time again these 'masters' conclude that when they enter into a genuine human relationship with their clients, when they get real and put the rulebook aside, things truly start to happen. The contributors interviewed by Kottler and Carlson come from many different professional and theoretical orientations, yet this common theme runs through them all.

It is comforting to know that even those described as 'masters', names such as Albert Ellis, John Gray, Arnold Lazarus, Michael Mahoney, Scott Miller, to name but a few, suffer from moments of uncertainty and self doubt just like the rest of us. In these chapters they don't only share successes and learning but they admit to being stuck, feeling incompetent, inadequate and asking themselves why they do this work.

The final chapters from Kottler and

Carlson reflect on the whole project of conducting the interviews and the two collaborators share some of their own learning from the experience. Kottler marvels at how he finds so many therapists 'filled with love' for their clients and their work, while Carlson says that what he learned from writing the book is that therapy can be more 'fun' and talks of the need 'to be myself, show compassion and caring for my client' and 'enjoy the relationship'. I couldn't agree more.

**Sue Rowe**  
MBACP (Accred)  
Counsellor, supervisor  
and counselling tutor



The editors claim their intention is to write a text accessible to readers from different perspectives, exploring the widely held view that the nature of the therapeutic relationship is more influential in determining successful therapy outcomes than the clinical orientation of the therapist. The emphasis on relationship has fostered eclectic clinical practice and a creative cross-fertilisation of theoretical perspective.

In addition to chapters on research findings, the book ranges widely, including psychoanalytic, person-centred, existential, gestalt, TA, CBT, relational and transpersonal approaches. Issues of power and oppression, which the editors argue have suffered from a lack of attention in the research, are highlighted. Other interests include: a Japanese perspective, creative arts, group therapy,

## The therapeutic relationship: perspectives and themes

Sheila Haugh  
and Stephen  
Paul (eds)

PCCS Books 2008

ISBN 978-1906254049

£20

and the use of touch.

Chapter two, co-authored by the editors, is a helpful rebuttal of the argument that if the relationship is the significant factor then anything goes and anyone can be a therapist. We need to know more about which aspects of relationship are therapeutic and to be aware that most research reveals its theoretical bias. The later chapter on research by Bozarth and Motomasa also emphasises the bias of most research, distinguishing between a reactive paradigm, cognitive behavioural and psychoanalytic, and an actualising paradigm, springing from the Rogerian tradition.

Of the theoretically based chapters I found Pam Howard's eloquent, concise account of psychoanalytic work

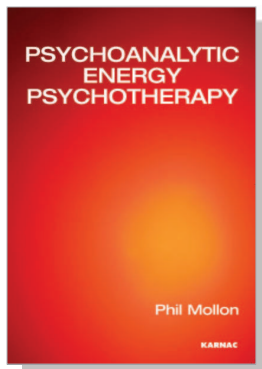


as 'largely concerned with love' (p.23) and its relationship to suffering via the unconscious processes of distortion, impressive. Ernesto Spinelli, writing about the existential approach, is also thought provoking in his assertion that: 'Quite simply we are our choices.' (p.53) Similarly Geoff Pelham argues that: 'The relational approach has shifted the focus from therapy as a process occurring between two separate individuals to a process that is co-constructed by therapist and client.' (p.110)

This book will provide a clear introduction for trainees. However its attempt to be inclusive detracts from the analysis of research findings. The concluding chapter's tentative language: 'it is not too far-fetched', 'it is worth considering', 'it is perhaps apparent', suggests the editors' awareness that inclusiveness has blurred clarity.

**Eileen Aird**

Psychoanalytic psychotherapist and supervisor



## Psychoanalytic energy psychotherapy

Phil Mollon

ISBN 978-1855755666

Karnac 2008

£29.99

This ambitious 500-page book is an explication and expansion of Roger Callahan's thought field therapy (TFT) but it is much more than that. Mollon's central challenge is that talking therapy is not enough and his case is impressively put. He is a clinical psychologist who trained as a psychoanalyst and went on to explore varieties of energy psychology, including TFT, emotional freedom techniques, seemorg matrix, the tapas acupressure technique (TAT) and theta healing. He condenses these into 'psychoanalytic energy psychotherapy' (PEP) in a compelling way, using case studies, instructions and theory to good effect. He is a clear and excellent writer.

Mollon argues convincingly that PEP takes up where the original Freudian stream of enquiry left off, and some space is devoted to Reich and others who explored this area. Mollon values EMDR but considers it limited for certain cases. Historical

background is followed by chapters defining energy psychology, basic procedures, neurological disorganisation, muscle testing, energy toxins, working with the chakras, bioelectrical energy, applications for personality disorders, case studies and related ethics for this area of practice. Vivid vignettes are presented that read very persuasively and there is no doubt about Mollon's clinical wisdom and devotion to finding effective techniques. Material on resistances and how to counter them is most welcome.

As a psychologist, Mollon fully admits the importance of research and indeed provides a helpful chapter – 'a systematic review of the evidence base' – which is apparently very well informed and largely confirmatory of PEP claims. However, one only has to glance at Lilienfeld et al's (2003) *Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology* to find a quite contrary summary of evidence put forward against TFT and associated therapies, including legal and professional sanctions (p.259).

Carroll's (2003) brief summary of TFT in *The Skeptic's Dictionary* is also quite damning.

To some extent we believe what we want to believe in this field. We marshal evidence but this is rarely if ever conclusive. Mollon's PEP is an intriguing model that deserves to be read, discussed and researched. Curiously, it draws very little from the humanistic camp where it would probably find most natural support. In spite of a natural scepticism, I find the book hard to dislike and recommend it on the basis of its sincerity, enthusiasm and comprehensiveness. It could even help shift the current uncritical bias towards (an overly talking-based) CBT to a more mature integration of cognitive, affective and somatic processes and add to the call for greater emphasis on transcultural healing methods.

**Colin Feltham**

Professor of Critical Counselling Studies, Sheffield Hallam University



Feedback and suggestions for titles for review welcome. Email reviews@bacp.co.uk