

BOOK REVIEW

Self - Help for Trauma Therapists: A Practitioner's Guide

Margaret Pack

Routledge, Abingdon, U.K., 2017

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“Self – Help for Trauma Therapist’s a practitioner’s guide” is a summary of 15 years’ of academic research, personal reflections and clinical experience of the author, Margaret Pack, previously based in Aotearoa New Zealand and employed in Mental Health as a social worker, psychotherapist and case manager for the Accident Compensation Corporation sensitive claims unit in Aotearoa New Zealand before embarking on an academic career both in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.

Pack’s passionate interest and purpose for this book is to provide a resource for those in the helping professions who are at risk of vicarious traumatisation and burnout, and who have or are currently experiencing poor clinical or managerial supervision in their workplace.

The book has 10 chapters inviting the reader to choose their chapter of interest and to use the reflective questions at the end of each chapter as a prompt for further reflections, including journaling their responses. Each chapter includes references and links to websites.

This book is a mix of an academic and a grass roots approach. It provides a scaffold for new practitioners to use as a guide when working with trauma survivors. There are excerpts from the author’s research participants and from her own experience used to amplify her point that self-care is of critical importance for those in the frontline.

More experienced practitioners may find some of the early chapters that define aspects of trauma and stress contain knowledge with which they are already familiar, yet the research findings in the book are also moving and affirming.

I found the book a useful reflective tool to examine my own experiences. As a social worker and psychotherapist, I could relate to much of what the book addresses. I reflected that since the DSAC (Doctors for Sexual Abuse) seminars in Aotearoa New Zealand are not currently as frequent as they were previously, there has been a dearth of ongoing training outside of the tertiary education sector to support frontline workers in their clinical and supervisory capacities to address well-being and ongoing self-care when working in the field of trauma.

Margaret Pack has succeeded in writing an accessible book, for a wide range of disciplines including Psychotherapy, Counselling and Social Work, as a guide for those in the helping professions that work with trauma survivors.

Claire Virtue

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