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Integrating Sex and Marital Therapy: A Clinical Guide

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Krueger's stand toward logistics seems somewhat outdated. He suggests that an assistant moderator should take notes and operate a visible tape recorder (he considers the use of hidden tape recorders unnecessarily secretive). In my opinion, the use of nonintrusive recording devices is standard in focus group research and is far superior and less disruptive than conspicuous note-taking of equipment sitting mid-table. Sociological practice ethics require that participants be notified at the beginning of the session that they are being recorded and/or being observed by clients and research assistants through one-way mirrors (also standard industry practice). If they understand that this is to ensure accuracy of data analysis and that anonymity will be preserved in all cases, participants can relax into a natural and informal discussion of the topic at hand. When specially-designed focus group rooms are not available, tape-recording equipment should be duplicated so that note-taking is not essential.

Finally, the text is annoyingly repetitive—a fault that could be corrected in a later edition. The bibliography, however, which is current and draws from a variety of settings, is both pragmatic and of scholarly interest to sociological practitioners.

It will be interesting to observe in the next decade whether the focus group method will become recognized as more than a fad of the 1980s. It may take its rightful place as a superb example of qualitative sociological methodology that, properly used, can yield valid, reliable, and meaningful social data. Training workshops sponsored by the Sociological Practice Association will play a significant part in the professionalization of focus group methodology.

Integrating Sex and Marital Therapy: A Clinical Guide, edited by Gerald R. Weeks and Larry Hof. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1987. 225 + pp.

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"Eclectic approach" is a label frequently used by clinicians and/or academics to refer to their work. Such a claim is often represented by a disjunctive set of ideas and/or actions that are ineffective and ineffective at best, or confusing and counter-productive at worst. Weeks and Hof have produced a text that does not fall victim to the "eclectic flaw." *Integrating Sex and Marital Therapy* is an excellent set of readings which reflect a systemic approach, integrating the multi-dimensionality of sexual problems that couples experience. The book has two major divisions. Part I focuses on conceptualizing sexual problems from a systems perspective; it is subdivided into theoretical issues and practical applications. Part II deals with special problems the clinician might encounter.

The issues to be considered in evaluating the marital relationships of clients

with sexual complaints are enumerated in the first chapter. The relevance of individual, couple, and intergenerational factors are discussed. In the second chapter the authors point out the dysfunctionality in couples trying to negotiate issues of love, intimacy and sex. Resources such as money and time are negotiable; but love, intimacy, and sex which are related to caring, sharing and feeling, are not. The use of negotiation and power struggles in the latter can undermine intimacy in the relationship. An excellent statement of intergenerational impact on couples with sexual problems is found in chapter 3. The authors discuss the relationship between structural boundaries or parents and children: "parents' ability to have a sexual relationship serves as a generational marker, proving their adulthood both to their own parents and to their children." The implications of this theoretical position are explored in order to reflect the fact that the family of orientation can impact on the marital sexual problem. The authors clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the sexual genogram for exploring this area.

A detailed presentation of an approach to making "a good marital situation better" is found in chapter 4, "Enhancing a Couple's Sexual Relationship." The focus is on increasing the level of couple intimacy within the therapeutic hour. Of particular note is the comment by the authors regarding the therapist's role and reaction to the couple during the counseling process. Chapter 5 centers on a critical contemporary issue of family: dealing with the sexual concerns of children. The author points out that "by active involvement or by default, parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children and many parents find this a confusing role, one they may be hesitant to accept." A very helpful set of approaches for the counselor to use in facilitating a more comfortable and competent parent as educator is presented. A very useful appendix includes a set of guidelines for parents when talking to children about sexuality. Finally, this section presents the use of "the new hypnotherapy" to facilitate resolution of sexual problems. The Ericsonian approach to sex hypnotherapy is presented as the model to be followed. The authors offer a systematic and detailed description of the process as applied to a series of common clinical problems, a most helpful selection for the practitioner who wants to gain insight and skill into the use of this technique.

The second part, "Special Problems," begins with a most salient chapter. The crisis of infertility affects approximately 17 percent of couples who are of childbearing age. Patricia Mahlstedt skillfully discusses medical and psychosocial issues and their relationship to infertility. She suggests a therapeutic approach that can facilitate the restoration of competence and feelings of self control that may enhance the probability of the distraught couple's recovery.

In his chapter on extramarital affairs (EMA) and extramarital sex (EMS), Humphrey offers a parsimonious statement on a very critical issue in American marital relations. He defines extramarital affairs and extramarital sex using four

components: time, emotional involvement, level of sexual involvement, and sexual orientation. Following a conceptual elaboration of these components, he outlines a set of specific therapeutic considerations. It is a well-integrated statement indicating the complications (ethical and practical) in dealing with the problem at both the individual and couple levels.

William Miller gives an excellent but brief explication of the social psychological impact of rape on the victim, the victim's partner, and the relationship. In his therapeutic directives he notes why and how balance of individual and conjoint sessions can be maintained.

Weeks talks about inhibited sexual desire as the discrepancy in levels of desire expressed by the couple. Individual, couple interaction, and intergenerational issues are shown to impact on this problem. Each area is addressed through setting therapeutic goals and procedures. He skillfully demonstrates the systemic nature of the problem and its resolution.

The central assumption of Goldberg's insightful work on hypersexuality is that labeling this type of sexual behavior is a problem in a couple process. He points out the importance of age and gender status as pivotal criteria for judging a person's level of sexual activity. Although he makes a strong case for the "social definition" being an etiological part of the problem, he lists and discusses other contributing factors ranging from drugs to physical and mental health. He proposes that couple therapy is most effective for treating this sexual problem.

Finally, marital and sexual counseling of elderly couples is discussed by Stone. Because this is an ever-increasing segment of the clinical population, the author defines aging as a normal human process which in no way precludes an active sexual relationship for the couple. A major part of his work is the discussion the age-specific sexual problems and therapeutic suggestions for counseling elderly couples.

The editors of this book have accomplished what they set out to do in creating an integrated set of readings that conceptually and substantively "fit together." The chapters are well-written and parsimonious; the authors use case studies very effectively for illustration and clarification. I think this is a good book for use in academic training of both graduate students and clinicians. It is a significant contribution to the literature in the field.

Becoming an EX: The Process of Role Exit, edited by Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. 247 pp.

Katherine Williams

Anyone who has ever played the "Who Am I?" game recognizes the centrality of major social roles—spouse, parent, doctor, woman, man, etc.—to