BOOK REVIEW

Psychology for nurses and the caring professions
(Fourth Edition) by Jan Walker, Sheila Payne, Nikki Jarrett and Tim Ley

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The book, Psychology for nurses and the caring professions, strives to provide a comprehensive connection between psychological theory and the role of such theory within caring professions. The new edition focused on creating parallels between the practical aspects that both nurses and caring professionals face within their everyday work and psychological theory.

The book aims to provide nurses and professionals in the caring context with a means to understand the commonalities between experiences in the field of psychology and those in the nursing/caring field, thereby enhancing the multi-disciplinary approach. The authors wanted to create a book that allowed for engagement and reflection facilitating processes of critical understanding not only to their work, but also in themselves as professionals. These practices are considered a means to augment therapeutic work within healthcare settings. In this manner,
the authors wanted to pursue an active engagement process rather than a passive theoretical understanding of the psychological concepts. The book is well structured, allowing for easy reading that facilitates learning. The layout throughout the book is divided into theoretical sections and concepts, indicating key topics within each section, which facilitate easy referencing to concepts already deliberated, as well as to particular sections.

The Fourth Edition includes exercises within the different sections, providing an opportunity for the reader to engage with their immediate environment and initiating reflective growth within the reader. The creation of this space allows for engagement and for the reader’s experience to venture beyond merely absorbing factual information. This allows the audience of such a book (nurses and caring professionals) to utilise these practical aspects in their work environment to further their understanding of such concepts and theory through this application. This application of psychological principles within a variety of different situations and contexts allows for consolidated integration and understanding of psychology in the nursing and caring fields.

This edition also presents what is termed the psychosoap, a clinical case example that the authors continue to build on throughout the book, thus providing crucial contextual information, and reinforcing treatment within a holistic understanding. These vignettes within the psychosoap, among others utilised within the text, allow the reader to consider real-life situations. These real-life situations allow nurses and caring professionals to enter practical contexts with useful psychological techniques that not only enrich patient care, but also serve as resources for the professionals.

An important aspect of the book was to develop the professional-patient relationship. Concepts within the book, such as ways to engage with children in healthcare settings (Chapter Four), approaching patients in nursing settings (Chapter Six), and ways to identify burnout as a healthcare professional (Chapter Seven), allow the reader to reflect on, explore, and integrate practical and theoretical concepts in order to promote the professional-patient relationship. One of the strengths of this book is the ability to provide theoretical knowledge in a means that is practically palatable and allows the reader to take something concrete with them. This is illustrated in the book providing techniques such as: de-escalating/dealing with aggressive clients (Chapter Six), presentation of information – in particular – communicating bad news to patients or families (Chapter Four), and ways of responding to anxious clients as well as the utilisation of mindfulness techniques in this regard (Chapter Eight). In addition, the book highlights research that illustrates means to promote wellbeing as well as coping skills for patients, which may have positive implications on relapse and concordance within the health system. The book indicates research-based evidence which is incorporated into the sections, emphasising recent findings and making use of summaries throughout the text, allowing for thorough and continuous engagement with the theory and the developments within the field.
Overall, the book is a relevant introductory text that provides nurses and other caring professionals with psychological theory, combined with knowledge about the practical applications within caring professions. Introductory texts are responsible for providing a solid foundation to build upon. Thus, there is often a tension between how much to include, in terms of the extent of the topics versus the depth of discussion of such topics – requiring a delicate balance. As an introductory text, it provides an overview of particular topics succinctly; however, at times further exploration may be warranted. This is particularly evident in the discussion of suicide: they highlight the prevalence of suicide and suicide attempts, and reiterate the importance of acknowledging such an issue within patient care; however, they do not provide further information in terms of managing a suicidal patient, or make reference to procedures in terms of referrals in such cases. Furthermore, some caution may be needed when considering the application of certain aspects within a South African context. At times, the book presents a substantially Eurocentric perspective which may not hold true within the South African healthcare systems.

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**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

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