

1999

Current Resources

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs>

Recommended Citation

(1999) "Current Resources," *Journal of Family Strengths*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 9.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol4/iss2/9>

The Journal of Family Strengths is brought to you for free and open access by CHILDREN AT RISK at DigitalCommons@The Texas Medical Center. It has a "cc by-nc-nd" Creative Commons license (Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives) For more information, please contact digitalcommons@exch.library.tmc.edu

Review of Current Resources

The Managed Care Answer Book for Mental Health Professionals. Gayle McCracken Tuttle and Dianne Rush Woods. (1997) Bristol, PA: Brunner/Mazel, Inc.

Reviewed by
Patricia Newlin, PhD, LMSW-AP
Adjunct Assistant Professor
University of Texas at Arlington
School of Social Work
Box 19129
Arlington, TX 76019-0129

This book, written for mental health professionals, is designed to address key issues related to practice in a managed care environment. For those private providers who do not want to practice within a managed care environment, options entitled "practice diversification" are offered. Gayle McCracken Tuttle and Dianne Rush Woods have incorporated their own practice experiences, writings, research related to industry trends, and presentations at workshops and conferences into this "nuts-and-bolts" (p. vii) work titled *The Managed Care Answer Book for Mental Health Professionals*.

The six chapters are organized to address the background of a changing practice arena, critical issues affecting private providers, group practice, payment and risks, marketing, and diversity in practice. Chapter 1 provides the background for the change of psychotherapy from a "cottage industry" to an industry of practice in the world of third-party practice (managed care). Issues discussed include such topics as practitioner's concerns, trends, definitions, accountability, stages of development of managed care, quality and accreditation, training, panels, and costs.

Chapter 2 is the most comprehensive and important section, written for providers who are considering entering the world of managed care. This chapter considers key issues that address how managed care will assist providers in their practice and may hinder their practice if they do not adhere to certain expectations. Specific issues addressed in this chapter include team members, treatment philosophy, provider profiling, credentialing, treatment planning, care management, outcomes measurement, utilization review, case manager relationships, triangulation, client advocacy, pitfalls to avoid in working with

managed care companies, continuum of care, and contract issues (confidentiality, termination, terms, policies, auditing).

Chapters 3-5 are written for the provider who appears to have made the commitment to pursue practice in a managed care arena. Topics such as group practice, payment and risks, and marketing are considered. Chapter 3 considers a variety of available group structures and basics in forming a group practice, group operations, and selling your individual practice. Chapter 4 considers issues related to payment to providers, capitation, profits, and other related financial arrangements. Chapter 5 gives the providers suggestions for how to market their practice in a managed care environment, including such topics as potential markets, outreach, use of panels, linkages to "primary care doctors," and developing marketing plans including responsiveness to the current market as well as future markets.

Finally, Chapter 6, titled "Life after Managed Care," makes suggestions to providers for diversifying their practice such as the "private-pay market," direct provider group contracting with non-managed care groups, and diverse provider group collaborations.

Overall, this book has many strengths. The book is written both from a research base and practical application for private providers considering practice in a managed care environment. Each chapter is designed to be utilized, based on the stage of development of the provider in this quest. The question and answer format, extensive visual exhibits throughout the book, and appendices will be valuable for providers as well as a comprehensive introduction for students of direct practice in social work and other disciplines who are planning to work in a managed care environment.

One area of weakness in the book is its limited discussion of provider practice in a managed care environment with the public sector. The introductory chapter has a brief discussion about the public sector related to the question, "What about the impact of managed care on Medicaid service for children, adolescents, and their families?" (pp. 11-12) Recent national studies of public child welfare agencies indicate that over half of these systems have managed care initiatives in their states or are planning to consider managed care initiatives. (GAO, 1999; McCullough, Payne, Langley, & Thompson, 1997) Although there are commonalities in this expanded public sector market that the private medical/behavioral/mental health provider could utilize in this book related to managed care, there are some distinct differences for future consideration. Notably, the differences that private providers should consider in offering their services to public child welfare in a managed care environment include the following: child welfare clients are typically "involuntary" and involve third party interests (such as judges, special advocates, parents, caseworkers, foster or adoptive parents). (Lutz, 1999; Pecora, Massinga, & Mauzerall, 1997)

Somebody Else's Children: and the Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families. John Hubner and Jill Wolfson. (1996) New York: Three Rivers Press.

Reviewed by
John P. Nasuti, DSW
Associate Professor
Department of Social Work
University of North Carolina-Wilmington
Wilmington, NC 28403-3297

Somebody Else's Children is a dramatic and engaging look into the inner workings of the juvenile justice system and child welfare system in Santa Clara County, California. Hubner and Wolfson examine the American juvenile justice system from two perspectives: the dependency or child welfare branch, and the delinquency branch. The result is a view of the juvenile justice system as a complex web of individuals bound together by esoteric laws and mind-boggling funding structures.

Somebody Else's Children is written with the narrative force of an epic novel and the urgency of first-rate investigative journalism. This realistic approach provides the reader a direct involvement with the lives of the children whose fate is decided by a complex and often contradictory family court system. The book has thirty-seven briefly written chapters that follow seven actual cases through the juvenile court system. Real case examples are used to highlight various situations that come under the jurisdiction of juvenile court. The situations include a dependency case in which the court must decide whether a teenage parent is responsible enough to care for a new-born baby, an adoption case involving a drug-addicted baby, a three-year-old child who was sexually abused, a violent eight-year-old involved in a custody battle, a gang-related aggravated assault case, a suicidal teenager, and a neglected teenager charged with murdering a social worker in his group home.

Somebody Else's Children has a number of practical as well as educational strengths. The authors captivate readers by using straightforward language and real-life stories to present an unusually levelheaded view of the American juvenile justice system. Their exhaustive detail and practical approach is informative and often very sad. In addition to the actual case scenarios, the authors begin each case with a short introduction to the social, economic, and political history of juvenile court as it pertains to its jurisdiction over the type of case presented. For example, chapter thirty-four provides a historical account to the major court

Child welfare systems generally lack clinical protocols. (Lutz, 1999; Pecora, Massinga, & Mauzerall, 1997) Cost and utilization data may not be consistently available for child welfare systems.

References

- Lutz, L. (1999). "Rethinking child welfare." *Behavioral Health care Tomorrow*, 8(2), 17-20.
- McCullough, C., Payne, J., Langley, K., & Thompson, M. (1997). *Managed care and privatization child welfare tracking project: 1997 state and county survey results*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League.
- Pecora, P., Massinga, R., & Mauzerall, H. (1997). "Measuring outcomes in the changing environment of child welfare services." *Behavioral Healthcare Tomorrow*, 6(2), 1-6.
- Tuttle, G. and Woods, D. (1997). *The managed care answer book for mental health professionals*. Bristol, PA: Brunner/Mazel, Inc.
- U. S. General Accounting Office. (1999). *Child welfare: Early experiences implementing a managed care approach*. (Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, GA)/HEHS-99-8). Washington, DC: Author.

decisions, such as, *In re Gault* and *Kent v. United States* and how they shaped the juvenile court system as we know it today.

A major limitation of the book is its imbalance toward a consistently negative portrayal of the juvenile justice system. The authors present only the extreme and most difficult cases. These cases are "no-win" situations, which characterize the juvenile court system as a monstrous beast that preys on children and their families. A few more successful cases would have helped show the positive side of juvenile court and presented those who work within the system in a fairer way.

While *Somebody Else's Children* may not be the kind of book everyone wants to read, it certainly should be read by anyone interested in juvenile justice. Its novel-like style should appeal to many. It would make an excellent supplemental reader for any child welfare course at either the graduate and undergraduate level. In addition, legislators who want to gain an insight and understanding of the problems children encounter when they are brought to the attention of juvenile court would find this book most useful.

Full Reference: Hubner, J., & Wolfson, J., (1996). *Somebody Else's Children: The Courts, the Kids, and the Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Assessing the Long-Term Effects of Foster Care -- A Research Synthesis. Thomas P. McDonald, Reva I. Allen, Alex Westerfeld, and Irving Piliavin. (1996) Washington, D.C.: CWLA Press.

Reviewed by:
Anthony N. Maluccio, D.S.W.
Professor
Graduate School of Social Work
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

Many children are placed in family foster care or institutional care for varying periods of time each year. What is known about the long-term effects of such placement on their functioning as adults? McDonald, Allen, Westerfeld, and Piliavin explore this question by reviewing the surprisingly low number of outcome studies published between 1960 and 1992 in the U.S., along with a few studies conducted in Australia, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom (for a total of 29 studies).

Following a brief history of out-of-home care in the U.S., the authors assess the research methods employed in the studies and highlight common methodological limitations in such areas as sampling bias, sample attrition, and lack of comparison data or control groups. In the major section of the book, they then critically examine the major findings of each study in respect to outcome in the areas of adult self-sufficiency, behavioral adjustment, family and social supports, and personal well-being. They also consider the diverse factors associated with outcome, such as types and number of placements, age at placement and discharge, and caseworker activity. Finally, in a series of appendices, the authors summarize each of the studies reviewed as well as an additional group of investigations of homelessness and out-of-home care. On the basis of their review, McDonald, et al., appropriately conclude: "We believe that a particularly strong case can be made for [further] research on the long-term effects of out-of-home care" (p. 142).

Through their clear presentation and balanced critique, McDonald, et al., provide a comprehensive and useful synthesis of available research, while also stimulating varied considerations for further study. Especially impressive is their analysis of the methods employed by the researchers and the limitations of research undertaken thus far on the long-term effects of foster care. However, their presentation of suggestions for improving or expanding research in this area of child welfare is limited. Further consideration of the

continuing challenges and potential approaches to the study of the effectiveness of foster care in general would have been valuable. For example: How can we deal with the issue of examining systematically the impact of foster care placement on adult functioning, when so many factors in the adult lives of former foster children can intervene to influence their development and functioning? How can we attain adequate control or comparison groups in future studies?

Although this volume offers little direct guidance for practitioners and administrators or policy makers seeking practice guidelines, McDonald et al. make an important contribution to the study of foster care outcomes. In particular, they provide a valuable research synthesis that can guide investigators, students, and educators in their efforts to explore such a complex phenomenon in child welfare.