

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Working with Involuntary Clients: A Guide to Practice (Third Edition)**

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Chris Trotter  
Allen & Unwin 2015  
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Chris Trotter's revised outline of an intervention model for work with involuntary clients usefully updates this valuable guide to effective practice. In a way that is consistent with the practices and beliefs which the book espouses, the guidance provided is thoroughly connected with research evidence. Particular reference is made to the author's own studies in the fields of corrections and child protection. The pro-social approach described is both accessible and practical. The book is concisely presented and the intervention model is coherent. Relevance for everyday practice is carefully explained and clarified further with the aid of practice examples.

The author acknowledges some of the critique which has been levelled at evidence-based practice and provides a clear explanation of how the concept is understood and applied in this text. The proposed intervention model is largely developed in three central chapters concerned with role clarification, promoting pro-social outcomes and problem solving respectively. Criticisms of pro-social modelling and problem-solving approaches are also considered and dealt with in a way that is largely convincing. Potential tensions between parts of the overall model are effectively re-framed as providing the basis for integrated practice. For example, the potentially contrived nature of rewards-based social learning can be balanced by the fact that this activity is openly acknowledged and agreed to within the collaborative problem-solving approach. This book warrants a central place in undergraduate teaching programs and it will continue to be equally useful for those engaged in practice. Expanded reference to risk assessment, cognitive behavioural strategies and the worker–client relationship are all welcome additions to this third edition.

This book is very successful within the terms that it sets itself – the development of a useful, research-informed guide to direct practice with involuntary clients. This pragmatic focus also means that some of the significant political dimensions which impact upon contemporary practice with involuntary clients are omitted or passed over lightly. For example, the emphasis on personal responsibility for negative social outcomes within a climate of increasing social inequality and power differentials impacts disproportionately on the clients of state-mandated social services. Although the integrated model developed here allows for some negotiation

of goals and means it is largely a worker-directed framework. It is something of a long bow to suggest, as the author does at one point, that a non-blaming intervention model is consistent with the critical theoretical tradition in social work. Clearly a more overt analysis of how mandated work is embedded within relations of social and political power is beyond the brief of this very well crafted text. Trotter does stress the central place of reflective analysis in practice. It is suggested that reference to these wider dimensions of power and socio-political change is necessary when reflecting on the use of this text in both practice and educational settings.

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