

BOOK REVIEW

Management and Practice in Health and Human Service Organisations

Lynda Berends and Karen Crinall
Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, VIC 2014
ISBN: 9780195524154. pp.346. Paperback. AU\$73

Lynda Berends and Karen Crinall offer a useful addition to the increasing literature addressing management in human services. The field has grown significantly in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand since the launch in 1977 of the US journal *Administration in Social Work* in 1977, known since 2014 as *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*. Changing “administration” to “management” is a perhaps a tangible illustration of how the social work profession and broad human service field has come to terms with management, particularly since the “new public management” (NPM) revolution of the late 1980s so profoundly impacted social service organisations in western jurisdictions.

Although the authors build on well-recognised Australian publications such as Jones and May (1992), Ozanne and Rose (2013) and Hughes and Wearing (2013), their primary source appears to be the US industry standard Lewis, Packard, and Lewis (2012) now in its fifth edition. Australasian perspectives are to be welcomed.

Berends and Crinall’s text is coherent, well designed and accessible. Adequate attention is paid to the historical development of management and leadership thinking in Chapter 1 as setting the scene for the whole book. For this reviewer, the research-based management and leadership case and practice examples, and practitioner profiles, provide excellent application of – and balance to – the theory outlined. For that reason, the authors’ “overall goal to provide managers and leaders in health and human service organisations with a well-researched, relevant and accessible resource that addresses skills and strategies for good management and leadership” has in my opinion been achieved. Using vignettes from current managers to illustrate theoretical discussion bears comparison with the “Monday Morning Manager” series available on subscription from the US Network for Social Work Management (NSWM). Combining practice and theory also facilitates the adoption of this text by tertiary social work management courses.

Although the authors see their contribution as helping to fill a “dearth” (p. xiii) of Australian texts in the field, case examples and profiles from Aotearoa (Sue Carswell and Terry Huriwai)

create at least marginal application to New Zealand. I suggest that Indigenous perspectives raised by Carswell and Huriwai could have been complemented to a greater degree in this text by the growing field of Indigenous leadership and management scholarship in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere (e.g., Ivory, 2008; Sveiby, 2011; Tangihaere & Twinaime, 2011). Collective approaches to leadership in human service organisations represented by such research may also be legitimately connected to complex adaptive leadership thinking (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

The authors might have also given greater consideration to the tensions engendered by the revolution introduced by neo-liberal NPM policy and practice in human service organisational leadership vis-à-vis social work and human service values and ethics. Australian social work academics who have written on these themes such as Burton and Van den Broek (2009) and McDonald and Chenoweth (2009) offer useful studies on those tensions. I suggest that a resource for practising managers and leaders in human service organisations needs to discuss the values underpinning neo-liberal thinking since those values exercise significant influence on management practice. The issue of potential “deprofessionalisation” (Banks, 2004) to which NPM has arguably contributed perhaps needs further consideration.

That said, the authors’ offering is to be commended. For this reviewer, the chapters address essential human service management practice in seed form, inviting further exploration. The layout and length of the text is conducive to that exploration.

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