

## Book Review

### **ASSESSMENT OF CHILDHOOD DISORDERS**

Eric J. Mash & Russell A. Barkley (4th Edition), Editors

(Guilford Press, 2009)

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The most common reason children are referred for psychological or education assessment is that a teacher or parent believes they are not performing as well could be expected academically. Assessment is a process of collecting data for the purposes of (1) specifying and verifying problems and (2) making decisions about children. Therefore, overall I think this book lives up to this claim.

Also, Dr. Karen R. Harris (Vanderbilt University) says on this book:

“ An incredible resource. Leading experts provide the latest information on assessing a broad range of disorders, covering diagnostic criteria and processes; parent, teacher, and self-report instruments; reliability and validity of measures; and strategies for working with individuals, families, and other practitioners.....”!

This book is organised into seven main topics, including the introduction. Each section consists of various chapters describing disorders within the area. The introduction deals with the assessment of child and family disturbance. Topic two is concerned with behaviour disorders, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Topic three looks at mood disorders (including child and adolescent depression) and suicide risk. Topic four concentrates on anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents. The three remaining topics cover developmental disorders, ‘Children at Risk’, and the problems of adolescence.

Even though each chapter is written by different authors, the general flow of the topic is maintained throughout. Within each chapter the authors introduce the disorder, talk about various assessment procedures to be carried out, and in which order, compare differences between children and adults, and finally provide a summary. Often a list of the assessment test batteries is given with recommendations of when and how they should be applied rather than detailed explanations of each recommended test. The validity and reliability of most, but not all, tests is discussed.

For example, the author of the Intellectual Disability chapter (page 575) says “Specialized measures have also been developed to assess and provide curricula for specific sub-groups of children...”. In another chapter, the author of the Learning Disabilities chapter (page 599) says: ‘...the purpose of assessment of LD was not only to identify students with LDs but also to link assessment results to remediation.

No doubt, this book I have found to be well written. In addition, this book is easy to understand and follow, despite the large amount of references given within the text. Also, I was really well led into the topics. In some examples the authors include samples of the assessments and test batteries in the appendices which allows some one for a closer look at the assessment tools discussed in the main text. This book can bring a valuable overview of

all the areas for someone when working with children and assessing their behaviour. He/she may easily focus on specific chapters only in the book.

To conclude, this book is a very good text book for someone in the third year of their bachelor's degree or masters clinical training in childhood disorders. However, for the beginners in the field, they might have difficulty following the text, with lots of abbreviations talking about various assessment methods and tests. However, for the experienced, the contents of the book is not new to them.

## **Reference**

Page, L.H. (2009). Review of assessment of childhood disorders (4th edn.) Eric J. Mash, Russell Barkley (Eds.). New York: Guilford Press, 2007. 866pp. In the *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 18(3), 261. Retrieved 6 June 2015 from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2732734/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2732734/)