

## Book Review: Cross-Cultural Practice: Social Work With Diverse Populations

Contributed by Kimberly Kozubovska, MSW

Book review of *Cross-Cultural Practice: Social Work With Diverse Populations*, by K. Harper-Dorton and J. Lantz, reviewed by Kimberly Kozubovska, MSW  
Harper-Dorton, K., & Lantz, J. (2007). *Cross-Cultural Practice: Social Work with Diverse Populations*. Chicago Lyceum Books. 220 pages, \$29.95.

Most social workers are confronted daily with diversity issues. Harper-Dorton and Lantz have collaborated to present social work practitioners and students with an informative guide to increase cross-cultural competence. {mosgoogle right}

The authors center on the use of existential concepts in working with diverse populations. Readers need not be familiar with logotherapy or the works of Viktor Frankl to gain valuable insight from this book, although it may well encourage one to become acquainted with these.

The fundamentals of existentialism are explained, but theory is minimal and the application of these principles is the primary focus. Truly a tool for practitioners, the book addresses each major concept in a case study to demonstrate the utility in a clinical setting.

The model of therapy described in this book is comprised of helping clients find meaning in their lives, even during tragic circumstances. According to Harper-Dorton and Lantz, practitioners must understand the client's worldview and work within that frame to find meaning. The examples provided throughout the book demonstrate the necessity of creativity and forward thinking in social work practice. Specific groups of clients such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans are the topic of entire chapters, again providing case studies and insight into each culture. A great strength of this book is the inclusion of chapters related to uncommonly mentioned groups, such as Appalachians, Vietnam veterans, and the elderly, thereby affirming the need for practitioners to think more broadly in terms of what it means to be cross-culturally competent.

The discussion of Vietnam veterans is sure to draw consideration to current war veterans returning home. Although this is a new group of clients with new characteristics of their own, the insight provided concerning the social climate and adjustment issues soldiers face upon returning home is salient.

Although the range of cultures and groups of clients discussed in this book exceeds most, it is disappointing to find no mention of Arab Americans, given the current prominence of discrimination against this group. A chapter dealing with common misconceptions and facts about Arab American culture would have been invaluable to new social workers and students.

I would highly recommend this book to new social workers, students, or anyone in a helping profession who would like to become more culturally competent. This book is a quick read with thought-provoking case studies and is nicely arranged by client group to use for future reference.

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