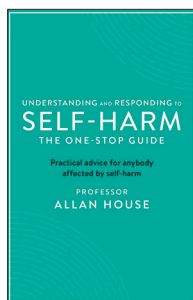


Understanding and Responding to Self-Harm: the One Stop Guide

Allan House

Profile Books, 2019, PB, 192pp, £8.19, 978-1788160278



PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR ANYONE AFFECTED BY SELF-HARM

Allan House, Professor of Liaison Psychiatry at the University of Leeds, has penned a short book in the 'One-Stop Guide' series that takes the complexity of self-harm, and breaks it down into manageable 'parts', and subsequently chapters, that are simple to read, comprehend, and retain, intended for those who struggle with self-harm, those who know someone who self-harms, and professionals who are in contact with people who self-harm.

The book is interspersed with regular and complementary pseudonymised quotes from people and professionals affected by self-harm, and boxed case studies augment the surrounding text. House professes this is not an academic book, and, to his word, there are no scientific references and jargon is well explained. Each chapter can be read, taught, or reflected on separately, or appreciated in the natural order of completing a book.

Parts one and two elucidate what self-harm is, and why people self-harm. House grapples with the academic conundrum of what the term 'self-harm' denotes, and does well to describe this clearly. Risk factors for self-harm are summarised and reasons for self-harm explored. To many, self-harm signifies uncontainable personal distress, but, to a few, self-harm serves a positive function: generating a sense of control, pleasure, or strength.

Parts three and four offer practical advice on how to help yourself, help others, and how to seek help from the health service. There are five very sensible tips for looking after yourself, three important points for

when nearing a crisis, and seven virtuous suggestions for when you are concerned about someone's self-harm. As a GP, the advice outlined in preparation for seeing your GP is accurate and welcome. The 'List for my GP visit' is an essential consideration if it is difficult for people to talk openly and all GPs will find this helpful, even if immediately handed over.

Reasons for people not receiving the self-harm care they desire are centred on poor knowledge of self-harm, unsatisfactory communication with those who self-harm, and a scarcity of dedicated self-harm services or services not offering psychosocial support for self-harm. Every GP has experience of managing a patient with self-harm, but we know most GPs find it challenging. This thoughtfully compiled guide will assist to dispel confusion about self-harm.

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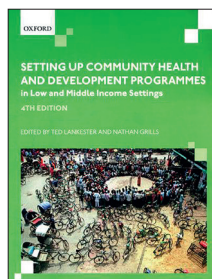
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Setting Up Community Health Development Programmes in Low and Middle Income Settings. 4th edition

Ted Lankester and Nathan J Grills

Oxford University Press, 2019, PB, 538pp, £24.99, 978-0198806653



MEETING GLOBAL HEALTH NEEDS AT A LOCAL LEVEL

Around half of the global population lack access to full basic health care. The sheer burden of health needs and challenges facing many low- and middle-income countries can seem insurmountable. Global health has

received increasing attention within medical training, yet the gap between awareness of need and ability to confront health inequalities through primary care remains.

This book aims to provide an introduction to starting, developing, and sustaining community-based healthcare programmes within low-resource settings. Both clinical and structural aspects of health system development are covered using a 'back to basics' style. Topics are practical and realistic, often born through the authors' lived experiences of what does and doesn't work within different settings. A significant emphasis is placed on the importance of community empowerment and partnership in identifying and meeting local needs. This goes beyond health provision, considering the importance of wider community and environmental factors, identifying and meeting social needs, working with traditional and faith-based community groups, and supporting the development of civil society. Often neglected topics are given much needed attention, including physical disabilities and rehabilitation, mental health, domestic violence, and palliative care.

Refreshingly, attention is given to the sustainability and resilience of healthcare systems, including management of personnel, finance, and potential risks stemming from natural or man-made disasters. Strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of health programmes receive due attention, with direction for improvement over time.

In terms of limitations, the breadth of topics covered results in theory tending to be generalised at points. Furthermore, the majority of contributors are based within the UK, US, and other anglophone nations.

Nevertheless, this is an engaging read and a worthwhile resource. Whether you are considering an overseas work placement, are involved in global health policy, planning, or research, or simply want to widen your horizons on the delivery of community-focused health care for vulnerable populations, each chapter provides sound food for thought. Who knows what it might inspire you to do?

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