

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of Ethical Practice in Psychiatry and the Law

REFERENCE: Rosner, R. and Weinstock, R., Eds., *Ethical Practice in Psychiatry and the Law*, Plenum Press, New York, 1990, 348 pp., \$65.00.

Ethics cannot be learned the way anatomy is learned, but ethical thinking can be developed. The objective of this book is to provide a framework for further development of the reader's ethical views, both in general and with regard to specific issues. The book's intent is to present diverse views on diverse issues in order to increase awareness and to challenge the reader's thinking. The book does that very well.

This volume is an accumulation of 22 different presentations. Some have been previously published or presented, and some have been prepared specifically for this volume.

The first section of the book addresses issues and approaches to ethics in forensic psychiatry. A particularly helpful discussion of the contrast between a physician's ethics and an attorney's ethics is presented by Edward Hundert, medical ethicist of McLean Hospital.

The second portion of the book presents the views of several of the nation's most respected figures in forensic psychiatry. Each discusses his model or guidelines for the ethical practice of forensic psychiatry. Among the authors in this section are Bernard Diamond, Ralph Slovenko, Henry Weinstein, Abraham Halpern, and Spencer Eth.

Of particular interest in this section is the consideration of the purpose of expert testimony and how that purpose is fulfilled. Also discussed are procedures for handling ethical violations when they occur.

The third part of the book discusses particular applications of ethical concepts in forensic psychiatry. Ten different authors present papers on such issues as prediction of dangerousness, ethics and the death penalty, sexual issues, surrogate parenting, homosexuality, the elderly, and mandatory drug testing.

The reader who is looking for answers to ethical questions will not find them in this volume. All of the presentations in this book clearly show that ethical concepts are a process of balancing the multiple "right" approaches to a particular question when those various approaches oppose each other. The book shows how to go about addressing an ethical question but also shows that no one answer to an ethical question can be considered "right" from all points of view. This book cannot resolve ethical questions, but it does serve as an excellent facilitator and clarifier for further discussion of such questions.

Although the book specifically addresses issues in forensic psychiatry, it will be a helpful volume to any physician, or attorney, or anyone in the health field who struggles with ethical questions. Although several of the chapters have already been published elsewhere, this volume of 22 presentations is a very helpful collation of papers by some of our nation's most respected authors on the ethics of forensic psychiatry.

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