

well controlled, the use of marijuana has been observed to induce psychosis again. A 1989 study of 45,000 Swedish conscripts showed that heavy marijuana users were six times as likely as nonusers to develop schiz-

ophrenia. This finding suggests some sort of relationship between marijuana use and schizophrenia.

However, overall I believe that *Straight Talk About Your Mental Health* is a worthwhile book.

Couple Therapy With Gay Men

by David E. Greenan and Gil Tunnell; New York, Guilford Press, 2003, 234 pages, \$30

Jack Drescher, M.D.

It is laudable when heterosexual therapists say, "I treat my gay patients just as I do my straight ones." However, therapists sometimes need to be reminded that growing up gay can be a different cultural experience than growing up heterosexual. In other words, there are specific issues that inevitably come up for patients who are members of a sexual minority of which therapists in the heterosexual majority may be unaware. This point is repeatedly driven home by David E. Greenan and Gil Tunnell in *Couple Therapy With Gay Men*.

The authors come across as skilled and knowledgeable therapists who offer a practical model for treating an underserved and often misunderstood patient population. The first two chapters cover developmental theory about the experience of growing up gay. Here the authors walk a fine line between trying to describe what it is like to be gay and trying to avoid giving the impression that being gay leads to greater psychopathology. Nevertheless, both here and later in the book, the authors succeed in heightening the reader's awareness of the potential impact of antihomosexual bias. As the authors note, it often takes a community to sustain a couple, and, because of prejudice, many gay couples lack supportive networks. The book also illustrates how the unconventional couple can provide insights about what constitutes a functioning relationship.

The authors work in the structural family therapy model of Salvador Minuchin, which is described in chapter 3. Their clinical approach fo-

First Aid to Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Patients and Caregivers

by Michael G. Rayel, M.D.; Clarenville, Newfoundland, Canada, Soar Dime, 2002, 200 pages, \$19.95 softcover

Brian Tsuzaki, M.D.

The title of this book describes the book's purpose and content well. In *First Aid to Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Patients and Caregivers*, Michael Rayel, M.D., addresses a significant need: teaching patients and caregivers how to better detect symptom exacerbation—or onset of symptoms—early, what to do about it, and what to do next to continue to support someone through an episode.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section teaches a general approach to mental illness, largely through the use of acronyms—for example, the CARE approach: checking for signs of mental illness, anticipating complications, remedying with early intervention, and educating oneself about the illness. The second section devotes a chapter each to 12 major types of disorders, such as depression, mania, psychosis, and substance abuse.

Dr. Rayel's writing is clear and easy to read. All the information presented in the book is accurate. Rayel's frequent examples make complex concepts easier to understand. His use of acronyms is creative and effective. However, it might have been better to include fewer acronyms—I found it somewhat difficult to keep the acronyms straight in my head.

In general, I thought the first sec-

tion of the book was very useful. However, Dr. Rayel tries to teach a few concepts that are too complicated for this forum. For example, he attempts to teach readers how to identify cognitive distortions in the span of two pages. The second section is not as useful. Each chapter describes symptoms, possible complications, and first-aid interventions for each type of disorder. The intervention section of each chapter is basically the same generic template of techniques taught in the first section of the book, with little tweaks to individualize it to each type of disorder. Concepts that are key to particular disorders are not highlighted enough. For example, a regular sleep-wake cycle is recommended for all types of disorders but is not emphasized as being vital for persons with bipolar disorder.

Dr. Rayel teaches in an objective, step-by-step manner. I think this style works well for caregivers, who need to remain objective and practical when their loved ones are going through the exacerbation or onset of symptoms. I will recommend this book to motivated caregivers after informing them of the book's strengths and weaknesses. For patients, however, Dr. Rayel's style may give the impression of a lack of empathy and an oversimplification of an experience that turns a person's life upside down. I will therefore recommend the book only to patients who I know will appreciate its style.

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