

Preface

This is the first book on our clinical practice in child and adolescent psychiatry in Singapore. It was initially conceptualised for doctors undergoing training in child and adolescent mental health at the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Institute of Mental Health. This text was meant to give an outline of the child and adolescent mental health practice carried out at the Child Guidance Clinic in Singapore. Over the years, the volume has enlarged, with multiple inputs from our growing multi-disciplinary team. We therefore felt that the time was ripe to make it into a more relevant publication, for a larger audience.

The year 1970 was when we started our services. These have since grown to comprise the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) and Children One-stop Psycho-educational Services (COPES), located in the Health Promotion Board building; the Sunrise Wing, an inpatient ward at Woodbridge Hospital; and a new project involving a mobile community team with a crisis helpline for professionals.

This is a record of the collective experience and expertise of our multi-disciplinary team. Many of the staff, junior or senior, had studied as undergraduates or postgraduates in clinical training under the Health Manpower Development Plan at renowned overseas centres in the US, the UK, Canada and Australia. Relevant clinical histories and findings are presented to illustrate points. Care is taken to maintain the anonymity of the parents and children by not using their real names and by altering some facts without losing the significance of the issues under discussion.

The love, dedication and sacrifice of the parents for their children impressed us deeply. We learn much from the parents and their children who use our services. To all our clinical teachers, both local and overseas, who have been untiringly and selflessly imparting their skills and knowledge, we owe a heavy debt.

This book was designed with the needs of the busy clinician in mind. We very much hope that undergraduate students in psychiatry, psychology, social work and related disciplines, as well as medical graduates who are interested in the clinical work of child and adolescent psychiatry, will find the book useful and will be stimulated to think of better ways to help children and families in distress.

Finally, as new ideas, knowledge and research findings emerge, it is hoped that future generations in this area of practice will revise and update the book continuously. We would like to thank Dr Ong Say How and Dr Lim Choon Guan, who helped to peruse the transcripts and were generous with their time and patience.

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