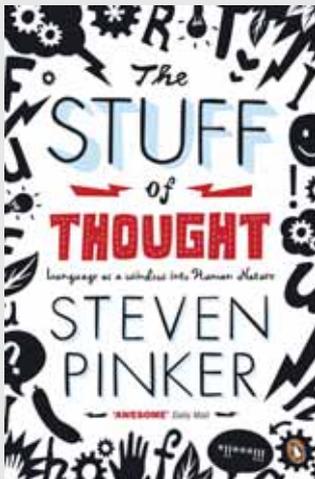


Informing and stimulating



The Stuff of Thought:
Language as a Window into
Human Nature
Steven Pinker

Can the study of language reveal the process by which we have evolved, as a species, to think in incredibly sophisticated ways about the world around us? The answer to this would be a definite 'Yes' from Steven Pinker. Reassuringly, the work of the many researchers and theorists that he refers to throughout his latest book adds weight to this conviction.

In this thought-provoking book, Pinker is bringing together his previous work on language with his other, broader perspectives on evolutionary psychology, developed in *The Blank Slate*. This creates a more satisfying and compelling unifying theory about the processes involved in the evolution of human consciousness.

In the first, and larger section, he shows how language structure reveals how we have learned, in evolutionary terms, to extrapolate,

through metaphor, from a few basic thought schemas. These start based on the three dimensions of the real world and our own, subjective interpretations of intentionality and causation, to go on to create the structure of our present conceptualisations and how we discuss them in language. In this he is expanding the ideas he has put forward before of the human brain as an almost limitless combinatorial neural matrix which has evolved to allow us to develop in these ways.

In the later section, he extends this to looking at how language reveals the fundamental ways in which we relate to each other: sharing, ranking and trading. This section is fascinating in what it reveals about our deeper motives and our use of disingenuous language to conceal them. It has, I feel, much in it to inform and stimulate debate within many departments of psychology, psychotherapy and even politics.

The book is a lengthy read, with the main argument developed slowly, but very surely; punctuated throughout with wit and contemporary relevance. I would recommend it to a wide range of disciplines of social sciences, not just those interested in linguistics and evolutionary psychology.

| Penguin; 2008; Pb £9.99

Reviewed by Steve Heigham

who is in private practice as a psychotherapist, and is also a lecturer of psychology and counselling in further education



Fostering protection

Understanding Looked After Children: An Introduction to Psychology for Foster Care by Jeune Guishard-Pine, Suzanne McCall & Lloyd Hamilton

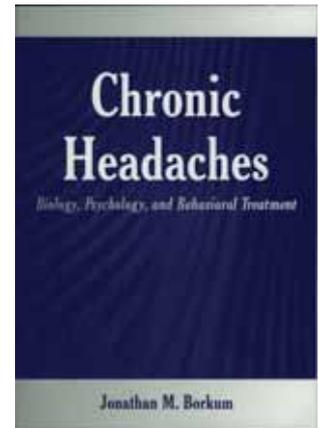
Understanding Looked After Children is written for current or intending foster carers, with the aim of explaining the psychological impact of being in care on children and on the families they join. There is growing interest in the significant mental health needs of such children and also in those interventions that may help. Foster carers are increasingly asked to become 'professionalised' as they are a key part of the 'protective shield' or team around the child.

The authors' approach is twofold – to reflect the multidisciplinary world that surrounds looked after children and their foster carers, and to make accessible psychological language and concepts. Some of the theories explored are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, attachment, and the development of identity. These are applied to the cultural, legal and social processes of the English care system, with useful chapters on assessment through intervention and on transition.

The authors have the authority of experience, and they neither give an over-glowing picture of fostering, nor condescend. Their book will be suitable for adoptive parents and by professionals, whether trainee or experienced.

| Jessica Kingsley Publishers; 2007; Pb £14.99

Reviewed by Miriam Landor



All in your head?

Chronic Headaches: Biology, Psychology, and Behavioral Treatment by Jonathan M. Borkum

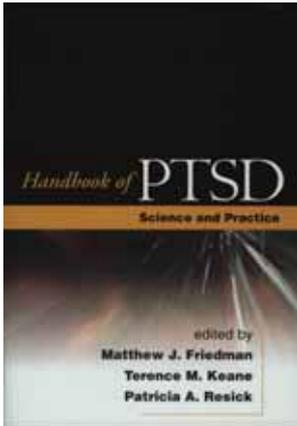
This is not for the faint-hearted – it is a highly structured and technical review of the latest theory, research and treatment of chronic headaches. It is enlightening and espouses treatment from the mind-body paradigm.

Borkum discusses the results of his 50 years of research and clinical trials into this all-pervading, disabling pain. The writing is adroit, comprehensive and scientific, drawing extensively from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, biology, clinical medicine and pharmacology.

Students in psychology, health sciences, counselling, psychotherapy or medicine can use this book as a medical and psychological primer in pain management. It succinctly discusses and analyses recent and historical research and integrates the findings. From the treatment perspective, clinical psychology benefits from a forthright coverage of psychological treatment and attendant clinical observations. GPs who do not have grounding in psychology can select pertinent sections of the book to enhance treatment of pain and headaches. Borkum covers all the major forms of chronic benign headache and concisely brings together the ever-expanding studies of psychology and medicine.

| Lawrence Erlbaum; 2007; Pb £36.95

Reviewed by Ian Clancy



28 years of PTSD

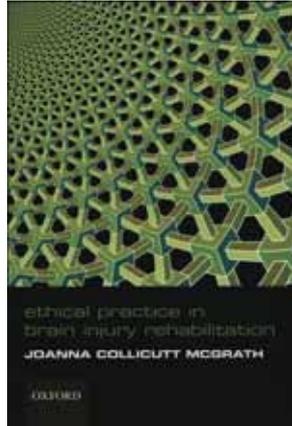
Handbook of PTSD: Science and Practice
Matthew J. Friedman,
Terence M. Keane & Patricia
A. Resick (Eds.)

The decision to include the construct of PTSD in DSM III in 1980 was a controversial one at the time (and remains so for some psychologists). However, it opened the door to a large body of research that has greatly developed the knowledge base on the psychological effects of trauma. This scholarly work attempts to summarise the current knowledge base and reflect on controversies in the trauma field.

Initial chapters provide a useful historical overview of psychological and psychiatric perspectives prior to 1980. The second section focuses on scientific foundations and theory from a number of angles – epidemiological, psychological and neurobiological. Issues of clinical practice include early intervention, psychosocial interventions, interventions for children and cultural issues and trauma. The final section explores 'uncharted territory' including more controversial forms of intervention.

This book is of particular interest to service developers, researchers and academics in the field and those searching for a thorough grounding of the literature. It is likely to be less useful to clinicians seeking guidance about intervention. I thoroughly recommend it and I feel it should be a key text for psychology libraries.

| Guilford Press; 2007; Hb £50.00
Reviewed by Neil Roberts



A helpful guide

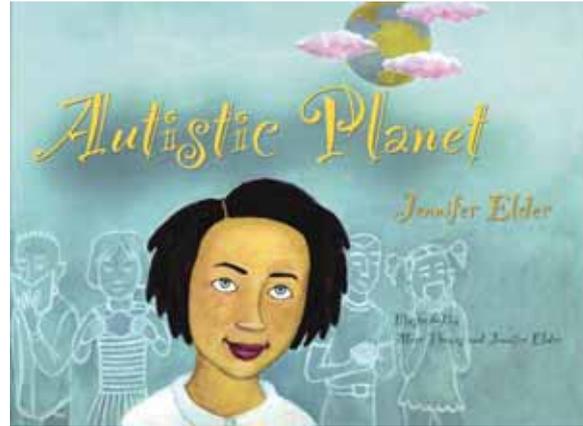
Ethical Practice in Brain Injury Rehabilitation
Joanna Collicutt McGrath

This book provides a resource for exploring and tackling the difficult ethical dilemmas that regularly occur in clinical practice. Although written from a brain injury perspective, the content is highly relevant to other areas of clinical psychology practice; those working in learning disabilities and dementia care are likely to find the text highly relevant and useful when negotiating ethical issues within their fields.

The book begins with an interesting and thought-provoking insight into the daily dilemmas inherent when working within pressured and limited NHS resources. Throughout, the reader is provided with practical guidelines and principles that can assist in managing difficult decisions; this includes a useful and accessible heuristic for managing ethical dilemmas, which many clinicians are likely to find a helpful guide.

The final chapter includes case studies that provide the reader with real-life examples of the principles previously discussed, providing a useful and informative resource for clinicians. With accessible and clearly written practical ideas, this book is likely to assist a wide range of clinicians in the management of daily ethical issues.

| Oxford University Press; 2007;
Pb £24.95
Reviewed by Karen Addy



Not as we know it

Autistic Planet
Jennifer Elder

In this book, an autistic girl describes her 'home planet', a place of repetition, punctuality and sameness. Despite the clunky rhymes it is an admirable attempt to explain autism to young children, but in overgeneralising some very specific traits it will confuse those whose siblings or classmates are less able. Higher-functioning children with

autism may enjoy recognising aspects of themselves in the caricatures (although they might prefer other diagnostic labels such as Asperger's syndrome).

It's an interesting book which includes some stunning illustrations, but it is probably best used as the starting point for a discussion about the topic of autism with a well-informed adult.

| Jessica Kingsley Publishers;
2007; Hb £11.99
Reviewed by Emma Taylor

just in

The Kingdom of Infinite Space R. Tallis
Treatment of Bipolar Illness R.M. Post & G.S. Leverich
Personality and Intelligence at Work A. Furnham
Straight Talking L. Blair
Handbook of Emotional Disorders in Later Life K. Laidlaw & B. Knight
The Probabilistic Mind N. Chater & M. Oaksford (Eds.)
The Oxford Handbook of Hypnosis M.R. Nash & A.J. Barnier
Think You're Going Crazy? Think Again A.P. Morrison, J.C. Renton, P. French & R.P. Bentall
The Social and Applied Psychology of Music A. North & D. Hargreaves
Educational Psychology N. Frederickson, A. Miller & T. Cline
Mistakes Were Made: But Not by Me C. Travis & E. Cronson
Big Brain: The Origins and The Future of Human Intelligence G. Lynch & R. Granger
Emotional Processing: Healing Through Feeling R. Baker
Gay Affirmative Therapy for the Straight Clinician J. Kort
Who's Who of the Brain K. Nunn, T. Hanstock & B. Lask
Working Memory and Learning: A Practical Guide for Teachers S. Gathercole & T. Alloway
This Is Your Brain on Music D. Levitin
An introduction to Work and Organizational Psychology N. Chmiel

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