

Book Review

## **Behavioral Health Protocols and Treatment Plans for Recreational Therapy, 2nd ed.**

by Karen Grote and Sara Warner

Idyll Arbor, Inc. (2012)

Reviewed by Jo-Ann Coco Ripp

Winston Salem State University

The slim paperback volume of about 160 pages (with a listed price of \$45) fits easily into my backpack as I traverse the campus. Grote and Warner have created a resource that practitioners and educators can use to focus on successful client outcomes in the behavioral health setting. Students will welcome the practical approach of the information as well as the sample formats to use in formulating new ideas. The material is organized into three main sections: diagnostic protocols, program protocols, and treatment plans or symptom protocols. These areas address behavioral health but can easily be adapted or modified for other settings.

On p. 4, the authors state that an original use of protocols by recreation therapists was found in the rehabilitation setting with the term meaning “standards of accepted care for the different diagnostic groups...” A brief discussion of the use of protocols in recreation therapy follows with reference to the ATRA Standards of Practice and treatment protocols. The opening discussion concludes with a brief reference to the general use of protocols in health care.

About half of the book is used to cover treatment plans or symptom protocols. The other two sections comprise the remaining half of the material. Each section begins with a brief explanation of section organization. Diagnostic protocols have six parts: categories, assessment criteria, typically observed symptoms, process criteria, outcome criteria and a bibliography specific to the diagnosis. In the behavioral health setting, primary information on diagnoses is derived from the most current edition of the DSM. These protocol parts are provided in a sample format for readers to extend to use in their own practice or for educators to use for instructional purposes. Eight detailed diagnostic protocols are provided in the book. An example of one is Bipolar Disorder, Mania (p. 20.) Besides the assessment criteria and symptoms, expected outcomes such as “Create a personal plan to manage stress” are suggested. Within the process criteria

the reader can find helpful commentary and a list of modalities. Cross referencing to the treatment plan section is also presented.

Program protocols have eight parts: modality, rationale, referral criteria, risk management issues, structure criteria, process criteria, outcome criteria, credentialing required by staff, and bibliography specific to the modality. The authors have grouped the program protocols according to age: child/adolescent, adult, geriatric. This does not confine the reader to the age categories but is helpful in reviewing the framework for the information provided. Again, a sample format is provided; explanation of all the parts is given so the format can be expanded for use by practitioners and educators. An example of one of the program protocols is Circus Performance Program (p. 41.) The experience of the authors is showcased in the rationale narrative as the reader is gently persuaded to try this program. Referrals and risk management contain specific tips related to the age group, potential problems and overall strategies for success. The structure part gives concrete suggestions on such details as frequency, group size, and facility needs. Process tells details from how to identify resource personnel to procedures for conducting activities. A list of specific activities is also given. A list of suggested outcomes is also provided.

Overall, these first two sections offer very helpful information, a good foundation for sample formats, and detailed insight into the needs for persons receiving care in behavioral health settings. More detailed suggestions on how to measure the outcomes would be a recommendation as well as expanded resources for further investigation or exploration, especially for the programs. Ideas for other program protocols to be developed can also stimulate further research or sharing by recreation therapists. For educators, the straightforward presentation of the diagnostic and program protocols would appear to facilitate understanding among students.

Treatment plans are presented using a problem-centered approach. The plans are categorized into five domains: behavioral, affective, cognitive, physical, and leisure. There are more than 50 problem areas of focus, such as few social supports, poor concentration, or overt hostility. The format for all the plans includes the problem, general goal, objective list, interventions, and negative and positive or neutral terms to aid documentation. As an example, the problem of Somaticizing (p. 118) lists decrease somaticizing as the goal with one of the client objectives being to choose a level of activity that does not increase somatic complaints. Two of the suggested interventions are for the therapist to teach assertion skills and avoid reinforcing somatic complaints with discussion. The listing of documentation aids seems helpful to cite more specifically when preparing progress notes or other individual treatment narrative notes. Overall the treatment plans appear to be useful for practitioners who employ a problem-centered model of practice. As an educator this section would give support to improving student documentation skills as well as development of treatment plans. The authors suggest that the format for the treatment plans can be adapted for use in other settings.

The authors seem to have accomplished the purpose for the updated volume. Future revisions might incorporate more foundational and conceptual background for the use of the treatment plan approach. Consideration of other approaches such as the strengths-based approach for plans might also be mentioned. Expanding the diagnostic and program protocols sections is also another consideration. Adding more evidence for the program choices would be helpful for practitioners as evidence-based

practice becomes the standard in health care, education and human services. Recreation therapy practice will need to be based on solid evidence and this volume contributes to that need in the behavioral health setting.