

Book review

Critical Psychiatry and Mental Health

Exploring the work of Suman Fernando in clinical practice

Category: Book Reviews / Non-fiction

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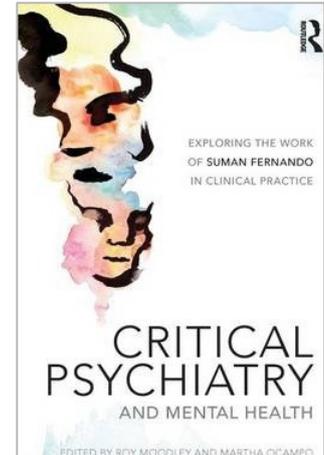
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Audience: For Mental Health Workforce

Summary: Enlightening discussion of ethno-psychiatry and current theories in mental health



A continual theme from this collection of ethno-psychiatry and multicultural mental health practices and policies is to understand mental health as a global topic. Don't forget that no matter how global the concepts seem, they are generated from the community, the culture and the people who hold all of these factors within themselves and their community.

This reminds you that although many people around the world experience mental health challenges at times, the reasons and the ways to provide support must be conscious of all factors which support positive mental health.

“Good mental health depends on many factors, but among indigenous people the world over, cultural identity is considered a critical prerequisite.” (p.231)

Kiwi connection

Critical Psychiatry and Mental Health covers the work of Suman Fernando and explores how his work affects the global understanding of mental health through the world's leading scholars and their research.

Within the many works there is a section called “Culture and mental health in Aotearoa, New Zealand” written by Māori mental health consultant Wayne Blissett and the Mental Health Foundation's CEO Judi Clements, who worked with Dr Fernando during her time at Mind UK. Blissett and Clements choose some very poignant words from a Māori elder to highlight Fernando's work as well as the work which New Zealand is striving for: “He tino nui rawa o tatu mahi, kia kore o matu nui... We have come too far not to go further, you have done too much not to do more,” (whakataukī spoken by Tā Himi Tau Hēnare, Ngāti Hine, 1989)” (p.234).

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This book covers a vast scale of detail and study which is quite dense, requiring you to take your time on the discussions to grasp and contemplate the theory accurately. But the work which Fernando does, along with others who take his work and research to the next level within their countries and communities, is enthralling. I believe anyone who wishes to learn more about ethno-psychiatry as well as the concept of theories in current mental health would find this book very enlightening and captivating in its accounts and discussions.

Reviewed by Kate Cherven, Fundraising and Communications Intern at the Mental Health Foundation

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