

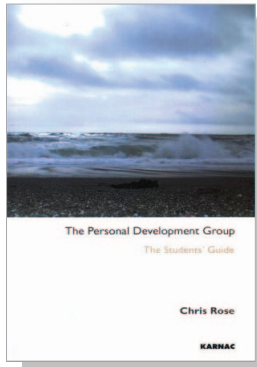
helpfully provided.

This being said, my favourite chapter is the last, 'Controversies and Debates about Formulation' by Lucy Johnstone. Relevant research is critiqued, 'truth' is examined, potential harm to clients and professional interests are concisely analysed and the author is not afraid of asking, 'Do we need formulations at all?' Rogers gets a brief mention here, as does the Hearing Voices Network, in some anti-diagnosis reflections.

The editors emphasise the role of formulation in 'making sense' of clients' problems, whether this is entirely collaborative or somewhat practitioner-led. Integrative formulation (and practice) is also stressed as befits clinical psychology training and resonates well with the same growing trend in counselling and psychotherapy. A lot of thought-provoking material and practical guidance is packed into this excellent text and it is likely to become an accessible classic of its kind.

**Colin Feltham**

Professor of Critical Counselling Studies, Sheffield Hallam University



## The personal development group: the student's guide

Chris Rose

Karnac 2008

ISBN 978-1855755352

£14.99

It is generally accepted that personal development forms a core element of the trainee's journey towards professional competence. However, nowhere is the confusion and ambiguity around the nature of personal development more acutely experienced than within the personal development (PD) group.

Rose has produced an essential guide for the trainee on her voyage of discovery. My enjoyment of this clear and flowing text was marginally hampered by the vexing distraction of typographical errors. Nevertheless, this wise and balanced account from an integrative perspective explores the life cycle of a 'typical' PD group. The metaphor of a journey at sea provides an effective framework for contextualising some fundamental and vexatious questions: Why PD? What's the difference between PD and therapy? Should the book be read by students, as it could conceivably distort the

PD experience by introducing expectations?

Rose begins with issues such as assessment, group size and format, who is in the group, and the role and style of the facilitator. The voyage includes: 'Setting Off' (different styles of beginning), 'Learning to Row' (disclosure and connection), 'Undercurrents' (resistance, ambivalence, absence, lateness and anger), 'Conflict' (meaning and acceptability), and 'Division/Diversity' (language, race, gender, sexuality, disability and relationship to power). These themes are sensitively explored using instructive exercises and vignettes. In 'Ways of Understanding', the PD group is presented as a unique opportunity to explore ourselves in relation to others, which on a micro-level mirrors the systems in which we are embedded.

I read this book having recently completed my training. It has been useful for

me in continuing to make sense of the experience. Would reading it sooner have changed my experience of PD? Certainly. But not necessarily for better or worse. Rose has produced a companion for self-awareness and personal development in this most unique of learning opportunities.

**James Costello**  
Counsellor



Feedback and suggestions for titles for review welcome. Email [reviews@bacp.co.uk](mailto:reviews@bacp.co.uk)