

purpose. The big question is: do those who are stuck in the mud of yesteryears have the will and energy to move their feet? The fate of the LIS profession depends on that big question. This book should be of immense importance to those who would like to move LIS profession forward.

*Mental Health in Malaysia: Issues and Concerns* edited by Amber Haque. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2001, 262 pp. ISBN 983-100-108-7.

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This collection of articles begins with the observation that it is erroneous to view mental health and illness as two ends of the same continuum. The editor argues that a person can be healthy and ill at the same time. Mental health refers to the whole gamut of health areas including the emotional, behavioral, cognitive, physiological, socio-economic-political and spiritual health. Mental illness, as such, is very much pervasive and is to be found in one's own backyard. Mental health, therefore, needs to be taken seriously. The book is divided into three parts. The first part supposedly deals with concepts and trends. The second part is concerned with special population groups with mental health needs. The last part explores the relationship among mental health, culture and religion.

Part one discusses the basic conceptual concerns, trends and historical contexts specifically to Malaysian experience since independence. Though this part is meant to present a sneak preview of conceptual issues of mental health, all the chapters in this part are largely concerned with the historical development of Malaysian Mental Health (MMH). Amber Haque provides an excellent overview of the MMH tracing its development to the pre-Independence Pauper Hospital in Kuala Lumpur in 1898. Ungku Suraiya Omar succeeds in providing an excellent analysis of how non-governmental Organizations (NGO) are instrumental in keeping the MMH issue alive in Malaysia. Of the three contributions in this part, the chapter by Sara Crabtree and Gabriel Chong is definitely the best. They raised a critical conceptual issue (pp.28-32) and thus lend some justification to the sub-heading of this part. They lament the fact that health institutions take care only of people who are physically handicapped,

blind, deaf, or those suffering from learning disabilities. Instead, they argue persuasively that a mentally ill person should be considered a "disabled" person who needs to be given proper treatment. Unless the mentally ill are legally considered "disabled," they will suffer all kinds of discrimination. The increasing number of private hospitals will ill treat the mentally ill since they are not considered, legally speaking, as "disabled." Likewise, the insurance companies would be very much reluctant to provide insurance coverage to this category of people. Gabriel Chong argues, first, that mentally ill deserve to be treated fairly by both the private and public hospitals. Second, hospitals should eschew the attitude of, what may be termed, custodial and controlling paternalism. Instead, they should ask family members of the mentally ill to be involved in treating the ill person. Finally, the NGOs working in this area should mobilize the family members to shoulder the responsibility of treating the mentally ill person with the assistance of qualified doctors. In making their case, the two authors follow the model suggested by Franco Basaglia of Italy.

Part two contains five chapters. Noraini Mohd. Noor in her survey based study shows that more and more Malaysian women are entering the paid labour force without abandoning their responsibilities for the home and the children. Thus, the "contemporary Malaysian woman has to juggle the demands arising from the familial domain as well as that of the workplace" (p.70). The pertinent question which Noraini explores is the effect of occupying work and family roles on women's mental health. Contrary to many Western studies, Noraini found that in Malaysia overload was not related to women's well-being and it fails to create distress (p. 91). This is due to women's upbringing and socialization that needs to be further probed. Teoh Hsien-Jin and Rose Peng's chapter throws some light on the state of Malaysian children's mental health and contrast it with similar information from other countries. They confirm that, as in other countries, there is a certain proportion of children in Malaysia with mental health problems. Of these, children from the Indian community had the highest rate of psychiatric morbidity while the Chinese children had the least problems. The sad part is that the Malaysian services for children with mental health problems are still in their infancy. This is an important study couched within the framework of multiculturalism, yet the concept has been ill utilized to present the case of Malaysian children effectively.

Teoh, Rozdinom Razali and Normah Che Din deal with Malaysian

elderly, particularly the issues of dementia, depression, delirium, mania, schizophrenia, and their hospice needs. Elderly issues are of serious concern as Malaysia is seeing an increase of the aged population. Crabtree's contribution relates to the problems faced by families in Sarawak. Her focus is on spirituality, "magico-religious therapy" and the like which she subsumes under the term "multicultural montage." Perhaps spirit possession is the area that modern psychotherapy should appreciate rather than castigating it as unscientific. Finally, in this part Habil provides a detailed prognosis to manage the addict population. Apart from regimented medication, the role of practical psychotherapy will help to restore life, inculcate a positive lifestyle, boost self-esteem, and overcome a depressive personality. In general, the chapters in this second part of the book did succeed in showing that the mental health issue is within the backyard of each and every household in Malaysia as it is in other countries.

Part three highlights the relationship between mental health, culture and religion. Though all the four chapters in this part are interesting, Azhar Zain's chapter on mental health in Kelantan ought to have been housed alongside Crabtree's treatment of mental illness in Sarawak under part two. The other three chapters by Shahrom Hatta, Thambu Maniam, and Dinesh Bhugra and Padmal De Silva, provide a strong argument to include religious factors in psychotherapy. Hatta deals with Islam and mental health, Maniam concentrates on Christianity and mental health, and Bhugra and DeSilva on Hinduism and Buddhism and mental health. At a time when the Western psychologists are skeptical about the effectiveness of psycho-religious therapy, the Malaysian psychotherapists are receptive to the idea of including religion in fostering mental health. It is hoped that this religious factor will receive further focused attention from the psychotherapists in their treatment of mental illness.

This volume is very informative and presents new insights in Malaysian mental health. It covers a wide range of issues within one cover, seemingly compensating the lack of literature on this topic. It is unfortunate that a work of such importance should suffer from typos (of Malay terms) and inconsistencies in citation of references. Furthermore, the book lacks an index. These shortcomings apart, this book should be of immense benefit to professionals and students alike.