

Book Review

Webster, Michelle A. (2018) **Emotion-Focused Counselling: A practitioner's guide**, Annandale Institute, Annandale Australia ISBN: 9780648048404

When I first trained at the Institute for Emotion Focused Therapy I was so impressed with the protocols and step-by-step guides for the Emotion-Focused interventions that I would joke that a little digest called *A pocket full of protocols* was needed. In this book my wish has been granted and so much more! To my mind this eye-opening practitioner's guide to Emotion-Focused counselling is akin to Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion*, which is an essential for the kitchen. It is the sort of book that will sit on your practice room shelf as a go-to guide, and probably be thumbed through on most days as you reflect upon clients.

This insightful book not only provides clear guidelines for practice but also in its first three chapters discusses the historical and theoretical context for the Annandale Emotion-Focused counselling method. While these first three chapters have great theoretical depth, the writing style is so easy to read that it becomes an enjoyable academic outline of the method. It is also a vital addition, as we need to understand the traditions that Emotion-Focused counselling comes from in order to make best use of the interventions and methods outlined in the following three sections.

The substantive part of the book is divided into three sections. The first section explores assessment. This includes an outline of tools for assessing individuals, their concerns and emotional states. It is these tools that enable case formulation, assisting counsellors to reflect upon the best ways to assist clients to engage in the counselling relationship and the person-centred, emotional processes of Emotion-Focused counselling.

The second section describes the protocols that facilitate therapeutic work. It gives a very comprehensive outline on how to conduct an Emotion-Focused counselling session. It steps through starting a session, working in-session with a client and concluding a session. It also details the micro-communication skills of counselling, an essential tool in any counselling manual but unfortunately all too often overlooked in both manuals and training.

Section 3 – 'Working with experience' – outlines techniques for exploring and deepening a client's emotional experiences. The techniques outlined are verbal and experiential and build upon, as well as add to, the Canadian Emotion-Focused interventions.

The book in total has 24 chapters. Each chapter not only outlines a step-by-step guide to the assessment, protocol and interventions tools, but is also packed with client transcripts, bringing life to the tools and also demonstrating their application.

This book is exceptional in that it somehow manages to have great theoretical depth while being written in a user-friendly style, which means it is suitable for both novice as well as more experienced practitioners. While the book is written about Emotion-Focused therapy, its practitioner orientation means there is plenty of material in here for counsellors who work in other modalities.

The book is testament to Michelle's almost 40 years of practice, supervision, training and research in counselling and psychotherapy. How fortunate we are to have this wisdom consolidated in this one useful book.

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