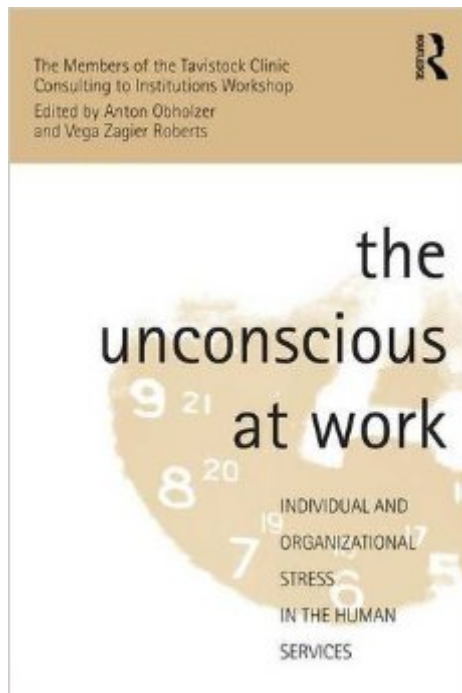


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# The Unconscious At Work: Individual And Organizational Stress In The Human Services



## Synopsis

Working in the human services has always been stressful, and the current massive changes in the organization of these services, together with dwindling resources and ever greater demands for cost effectiveness, add to the stresses inherent in the work. Even in the best run and best resourced organizations there are pockets of irrationality where unconscious institutional processes undermine both effectiveness and morale. The contributors to this book use ideas drawn from psychoanalysis, open systems theory, Bion's work with groups, and group relations training to explore the difficulties experienced by managers and staff in a wide range of care settings. Each concept is illustrated with examples from practice to make it recognizable and useful to the reader. Each chapter develops a theme relating to work with a particular client group or setting (including hospitals, schools, day centres, residential units, community services and many others), or explores aspects of work organization (for example, the supervisory relationship, facing cuts and closure, or intergroup collaboration). By describing both the difficulties and their own feelings and thoughts while consulting to these institutions, the authors offer the reader new ways of looking at their own experiences at work which will be both enlightening and helpful.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Unconscious At Work is probably the most influential book I have read on organization life, and what makes people tick in the organizations they belong to. Seven years on, I still refer to the examples in this book to explain my impressions and understanding of interactions between individuals and teams. The book provided me an insight that never occurred to me before. The

analogy of Freud's ego, super ego, id to the organization's primary task; the use of open systems theory to explain organization life; the contribution of Melanie Klein to the understanding of the projections we make upon managers, clients, and peers, to name a few, opened for me a new way of explaining the emotional place that we find ourselves at. The examples in the book vividly depict the projections that consultant experiences 'on behalf' of clients, or that clients inflict on consultant. Although I am working in a different business altogether (software), having examples from human services amplifies what we experience in any kind of organization. To me the book was a game-changer, and one of the key contributors to make a major career change. Highly recommended to anyone who wishes to understand how organization work, and why.

This book is like an fMRI of unconscious group life. You will find it helpful not just in work groups, but any kind of group. Highly recommend it.

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