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Gestalt Reconsidered: A New Approach To Contact And Resistance



Synopsis

In this original and penetrating work, the origins of the Gestalt psychotherapy model are traced back to its roots in psychoanalysis and Gestalt cognitive and perceptual psychology. Drawing new implications for both Gestalt and psychotherapy in general from these origins - and with special emphasis on the neglected work of Lewis and Goldstein - Wheeler develops a revised model that is more fully "Gestalt" and at the same time more firmly grounded in the spectrum of tools and approaches available to the contemporary psychotherapist. Along the way, a number of new insights are offered, not just in Gestalt, but in the working of the psychoanalytic and cognitive/behavioral models. The result is an integrated approach giving a fresh perspective on the universal processes of contact and resistance, both in psychotherapy and in social systems in general. The practitioner is given these tools for "addressing problems at the intra- and interpersonal level and wider systematic levels at the same time, and in the same language." Each chapter stands alone, and makes a fresh and significant contribution to its particular subject. Taken together, they constitute a remarkable excursion through the history of psychotherapy in this century, weaving powerfully through social psychology, behaviorism, and Gestalt itself, yielding a masterful new synthesis that will interest the practitioners of Gestalt and other schools alike.

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Customer Reviews

Wheeler takes Gestalt therapy in a whole new direction in this book, bridging the gap between Fritz Perls' biologicistic thinking and Husserlian phenomenology. The so-called "resistances to contact"

become "styles of contact" in Wheeler's vision. For the philosophically minded, this is reminiscent of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. For the clinically minded, Wheeler takes Gestalt therapy from its unfortunate preoccupation with 'technique' toward a thoroughly practical assessment and intervention of the total clinical field. The extraordinary thing is how he bridges between the foundational theoretical precepts of Gestalt theory and the concrete praxis of the practicing clinician. This book will change the the way you practice your craft on a day to day basis.

One of the few really impressive Gestalt therapy texts out there. The author has the smarts, the skills and the patience to bring Gestalt therapy out of the quagmire of showy charlatanism and to place it on solid theoretical ground. This book is controversial in that it challenges many of the nearest and dearest assumptions of Fritz Perls' ideas and practice--but it's encouraging in that it draws on Perls' (and others) insights to point toward a more complete, more radical and more fully humanistic Gestalt therapy.

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