



The Strengths Model: Case Management with People Suffering from Severe and Persistent Mental Illness

By Charles A. Rapp

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Traditional protocol among the helping professions, including social work, involves identifying and labeling particular pathologies and weaknesses of clients, and then prescribing treatment to correct the functioning deficits.

Nowhere has this tradition been stronger than in the mental health services for adults with severe and persistent mental illness. Too often, as a result of this pathology paradigm, the achievements and options of patients are seriously constricted, and quality of life for people suffering from mental illness is often inadequate. Unemployment and loneliness dominate many patients' lives, and most find themselves segregated from the rest of society.

The Strengths Model is the first text to focus exclusively on the alternative -- the strengths model of practice, which focuses on helping people, not as patients or clients, but as individuals. Empirical testing of this model and its results have consistently shown that it is superior to traditional approaches for serving people with mental illness. *The Strengths Model* presents the theory, values, and principles on which the model was founded, as well as explicit practice methods that have been developed and refined over the past fifteen years. The text includes detailed discussions of practice techniques such as engagement, strengths assessment, personal planning, and resource acquisition. Adopting a user-friendly style throughout, each chapter includes short case vignettes that demonstrate the use of these methods and first-person perspectives of clients. Offering a good balance between theory and practice, this text is ideal for students in social work, psychology, nursing, psychiatry, vocational rehabilitation, and occupational therapy, as well as for case managers and other mental health professionals and practitioners.

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Review

"An essential and rewarding read for staff and trainees of all disciplines who assist these individuals. It is a well-written, thought-provoking volume that explicates in great detail one approach to putting these emerging principles into daily practice...an exceptionally fine, detailed practice manual." --*Psychiatric Services*

"A groundbreaking book which offers easy-to-follow guidelines for students preparing to adapt the strengths approach to work with the mentally ill."--Katherine van Wormer, *University of North Iowa*

"The National Institute of Mental Health has promoted 'case management' as an intervention of choice for community health...Charles Rapp...had an important role in how that was developed and conceptualized....He has played a major role in redefining case management. This text is a product of those...projects [and] could conceivably become an anchor for that redefinition. I believe that the chapter on community resources...is by far the best thing that has been written on that topic. This is an incredibly content area for social work practice." --Charles D. Cowger, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

"Excellent conceptual framework. The strengths model is a useful model to design client services that enhance clients' involvement and functioning in their environments. Well-organized text."--Gwen Weber, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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About the Author

Charles A. Rapp is at University of Kansas.

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