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**Review of *Person-Environment Practice*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1997. Susan P. Kemp, James K. Whitaker and Elizabeth M. Tracy. Reviewed by Catherine Lemieux, Louisiana State University.**

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to the cumulative and interactive effect of these issues, coupled with changing world conditions, and how these affect the role of service professions.

Within this context, the various authors advocate how social work needs to adopt a more integrative and comprehensive model of intervention, such as that of Social Development, which conceptualizes human development as a sustainable gain only if it is achieved within the context of an economic development model that benefits all citizens. The book proposes a professional education focus, which covers an international spectrum of issues and selects multiple and simultaneous interventions to address these concerns.

This book is truly international in its approach and provides direction to the inevitable changes facing the profession as a result of the revolutionary world changes. Each chapter is written in depth and with great clarity, outlining issues at the global level and tracing their trickle down effect to a local level. Furthermore, all chapters discuss the changing role of social work in the context of the respective issues and provide principles and strategies for analysis and intervention.

The most outstanding feature of this book is in its persuasive arguments urging all practitioners to abandon their parochial outlook in favor of practice from a global perspective. These foci place the importance of human rights and social justice at the core of the social work profession and extol its legacy of internationalism.

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Susan P. Kemp, James K. Whittaker and Elizabeth Tracy, *Person-Environment Practice*. Hawthorne, NY, 1997. \$ 49.95 hardcover, \$ 23.95 papercover.

Social workers traditionally distinguish themselves from other human service providers because of their allegiance to a person-in-environment focus when interacting with client systems. The primacy of this focus was pioneered by caseworkers during the early part of this century, and later expounded by contemporary theoreticians such as Alex Gitterman, Carel Germain,

Carol Meyer, and Anthony Maluccio. Indeed, this trademark of the profession is so distinctive that the reader, at first glance, may wonder what could possibly be "new" in this area. Seasoned academicians may initially broach person-environment practice with skepticism; the acronym, PEP, after all, does sound suspiciously faddish and susceptible to rhetoric. Upon finishing the introduction, however, the reader will be convinced of the timeliness of this richly-referenced endeavor. Person-environment practice dislodges direct practice from the familiar, myopic, and often more lucrative clutches of individual pathology. It is presented not as a panacea, but rather as an approach that is both rooted in social work's legacy and consistent with emergent areas of practice.

According to the authors the purpose of this initial volume is to present and systematize interpersonal helping through an environment lens, and describe strategies for environmental assessment and intervention. Person-environment practice seeks to bolster the client's sense of mastery in three areas: managing stressful situations, resolving environmental challenges, and maximizing environmental resources. The conceptual underpinnings and value base of PEP comprise the first chapter, with emphasis on the primacy of partnership. Multidimensionality, flexibility, reflectiveness, and a commitment to empowerment are presented as key features of PEP. Chapter Two overviews historical and contemporary conceptualizations of environmentally-oriented practice and suggests that this approach has been marginalized by an elusive theory of environment and the concomitant abandonment of the poor and all that is symbolized by poverty. Chapter Three elucidates the interdisciplinary platform of PEP which consists of critical and constructivist views of the environment; empowerment and strengths perspectives; and current knowledge about social networks, social support, resilience, and protective factors. The client's environment includes perceived, physical, social, institutional and organizational, and cultural and sociopolitical dimensions. Chapter Four describes the nuts and bolts of environmental assessment, the overall goal of which is to empower the client to act in the environment. The instructions and diagrams essential to social network mapping are provided, along with a useful summary table of over

30 assessment tools appropriate to the different environmental dimensions. In Chapter Five the authors argue that enhancing social networks is at the core of environmental intervention, and is accomplished via the worker's allegiance to a strengths-based and collaborative posture. Natural helper interventions, network facilitation, mutual aid groups, and network skills training are described. Although peppered throughout the text, issues related to diversity comprise the bulk of Chapter Six. The authors argue that environmental experiences and interpretations pivot around a person's race, class, gender, sexuality, developmental level, and presence of a physical or mental challenge. Chapter Seven shores up concluding thoughts about the implications of environmentally-situated practice: the challenge of developing and disseminating knowledge, the role of participatory-action research, and practical and ethical implications.

Person-environment practice will resonate with educators who struggle to infuse macro concepts into micropractice while they prepare practitioners to serve clients with multiple challenges in unpredictable service environments. The utility of this text for foundation practice courses, however, is somewhat compromised by the (intentional) omission of core micropractice skills. On the other hand, educators will find the explication of assessment and intervention strategies to be indispensable reference material: It provides a concrete means of presenting both the inter- and intrapersonal aspects of helping on an equal footing. Veteran practitioners and academicians will revel in the succinct and pithy manner in which empirical and theoretical contributions underscoring PEP are presented, while those who are insufficiently embroiled in the literature may be intimidated by the breadth and depth of this material. Nevertheless, readers grounded in both academic and practice arenas will be duly rewarded for their efforts, the manner in which theoretical constructs are woven with implications for interpersonal helping has both intellectual and practical appeal.

The authors successfully meet their goals in this initial volume: They simultaneously normalize and stimulate reflection and dialogue about the environment as the proper locus and focus of interpersonal helping. They lay the groundwork for ongoing empirical investigation of environmentally-situated practice process

and outcomes. One unresolved nagging concern, for example, revolves around the attractiveness of PEP in an era of fiscal strangulation. Environmentally-situated practice is both time intensive and time consuming, and although a worker's immersion in the community makes good practice sense, the legitimization and validation of PEP strategies will ultimately stem from a radical reconstruction of current reimbursement strategies that capitalize on individual pathology. The claim that PEP requires workers to "practice with an attitude" (p. 18), appropriately foretells of the challenges ahead for transformers who recognize that the boundaries separating workers from clients are merely illusory, albeit comforting demarcations. A person-environment practice orientation can infuse hope, creativity, and energy into tired service-delivery systems that appear distracted by the need to justify their own existence. To extend a popular metaphor, the distillations in this book promise a means by which social workers may earn back their wings, not because we repent our unfaithfulness, but because we at last have a blueprint for an environmentally-responsive practice orientation.

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Donald T. Dickson, *Confidentiality and Privacy in Social Work: A Guide to the Law for Practitioners and Students*. New York: The Free Press, 1998. \$ 34.95 hardcover.

The fascination, perhaps even obsession, among mental health professionals of all disciplines with what the law is and says about a particular subject seems unending. Many good albeit general law and mental health texts have appeared on the market and have been useful to students to the extent that an overview of legal thinking and reasoning can be garnered from them. Some of these texts provide broad general sweeps of information interesting from a socio-legal and procedural standpoint as opposed to a substantive policy-practice decision-making framework. Now, in a succinct, focused, and fascinating exception to the norm, Professor Donald Dickson provides a bounty of substantive information in his latest text: *Confidentiality and Privacy in Social Work: A Guide to the Law for Practitioners and Students*.