



The Myth of the Untroubled Therapist: Private life, professional practice

By Marie Adams

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Therapists are often expected to be immune to the kind of problems that they help clients through. This book serves to demonstrate that this is certainly not the case: they are no more resistant to difficult and unexpected personal circumstances than anyone else. In this book **Marie Adams** looks into the kind of problems that therapists can be afraid to face in their own lives, including divorce, bereavement, illness, depression and anxiety and uses the experience of others to examine the best ways of dealing with them.

The Myth of the Untroubled Therapist looks at the lives of forty practitioners to learn how they coped during times of personal strife. CBT, psychoanalytic, integrative and humanistic therapists from an international array of backgrounds were interviewed about how they believed their personal lives affected their work with clients. Over half admitted to suffering from depression since entering the profession and many continued practising while ill or under great stress. Some admitted to using their work as a 'buffer' against their personal circumstances in an attempt to avoid focusing on their own pain. Using clinical examples, personal experience, research literature and the voices of the many therapists interviewed, **Adams** challenges mental health professionals to take a step back and consider their own well-being as a vital first step to promoting insight and change in those they seek to help.

Linking therapists' personal histories to their choice of career, *The Myth of the Untroubled Therapist* pinpoints some of the key elements that may serve, and sometimes undermine, counsellors working in private practice or mental health settings. The book is ideal for counsellors and psychotherapists as well as social workers and those working within any kind of helping profession.

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Editorial Review

Review

"... For this book, Adams certainly succeeds in putting to rest the myth of the untroubled therapist. In doing so, she implores us all, no matter what our therapeutic approach(es) or what stage in our therapeutic careers, to ask ourselves, how am I ensuring that how I am working is to 'the benefit of my clients and not purely for personal gratification at the expense of (my) clients and patients?' (p. 141). If this is a question you have pondered, I encourage you to read this book." – Shanee Barraclough, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*

"Every now and again a new book comes across my desk which highlights such an obviously significant aspect of our lives as therapists that it seems astonishing that it has not already been written and added to the essential reading of every psychotherapy training programme. The Myth of the Untroubled Therapist is such a book: Adams weaves insights from her own personal and professional experience with those of numerous other therapists into a highly readable and seamless narrative exploring stories of human vulnerability encompassing crisis, anxiety, loss and depression. In the process she debunks the fiction of 'the untroubled therapist' and, as important, reminds us how genuine engagement with our own inevitable difficulties in living can provide the surest compass for therapeutic practice." - Professor Simon du Plock, *Middlesex University*

"This book gets straight to the heart of one of psychotherapy's basic issues: why do people become therapists. There seems to be two prevailing myths about therapists: they are either completely neurotic or totally sane. These myths are held both within and outside the therapy profession. In this brave and honest book, Adams challenges both perspectives and, using remarkable and fascinating examples, shows that therapists generally have problems just like everybody else. This book should be required reading for all therapists and trainees; if somebody feels they don't need to read it - that might be a sign that they should!" - David Mann, *Consultant Psychotherapist and author of Erotic Transference and Countertransference*

"This book deserves to be on the reading lists of all psychological therapy training programmes, especially to inform trainees of the relevant ethical and personal development implications." - Professor Colin Feltham, *Therapy Today*

"[This book] is a frank, warm and refreshing read for any clinician working in the field of mental health... I found particularly interesting her analysis of how the different types of therapy that clinicians practiced were associated with either more or less personal motivation to enter the field, and subsequently, more or fewer feelings of shame when encountering personal difficulties... Marie Adams' book exists as a good source exploring the needs and issues that clinicians face in working with patients through a therapeutic process... a well-reasoned and compelling book arguing that therapists should feel more empowered to consider their own needs in addition to those of their patients" -Phillipe Kleefeld, *International Journal for Psychotherapy*

"The author of this important book, Marie Adams, who was trained in the psychoanalytic tradition, conducted interviews with 40 fellow therapists (from broadly four tradition; psychoanalytic, humanistic, integrative and CBT) as part of her doctoral research. She has interest in therapists'

experience of life events and the possible impact these may have on professional practice... After reading this book I am not so much surprised with what troubles therapists, least so that they are troubled, but more intrigued as ever with how therapists understand and deal with life events happening alongside their professional practice. I would recommend this book to both trainees and trained therapists, but perhaps to training institutions in particular, where these issues raised in the book would usefully be given a more explicit place in the training." -Sara Angelini, *Existential Analysis*

About the Author

Marie Adams is a psychotherapist and writer. Along with her private practice she teaches on the DPsycho programme at the Metanoia Institute in London. She is also a consultant psychotherapist for the BBC, leading workshops for journalists and production staff on trauma and mental health

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