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Book Review: Assessing Culturally Informed Parenting in Social Work

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Book Review

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Davis, Kiima. (2021). *Assessing culturally informed parenting in social work*. New York: Routledge, 166 pp., \$44.05. ISBN 9780367543839.

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This book discusses (in extensive, helpful detail) the importance of considering concepts like culture and context when it comes to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) parents. In other words, when assessing parenting practices and skills, there is no “one size fits all” approach that should be cast as a figurative net over parents from different areas, backgrounds, upbringings, and cultures. When assessing BAME parents, a social worker’s perception needs to be based on a variety of potential contributing factors (e.g., culture, race, and ethnicity), rather than an individualized opinion/approach, especially considering there is not one “ideal” parenting approach, nor is there one standard, absolute method for socializing children either. Additionally, the book provides examples about how certain normal, expected parenting or disciplinary approaches in some cultures could be viewed negatively by a social worker who is not knowledgeable or understanding of that particular culture.

This book provides a myriad of supporting reputable sources for its claims and information given. It is clear that much background work and research contributed to the preparation and completion of this book. This book also does well with not having a myopic lens toward its subject matter, but rather, the author presents various (all important) considerations to keep in mind when assessing BAME parents, particularly the importance of avoiding biased judgments when assessing families. Through the rich amount and detail of reputable information provided in this book, readers have the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge concerning the subject matter.

Helpful information regarding the precursor to this book was also provided, which was a study that included 40 BAME parents and 40 social workers. Some findings from the aforementioned study indicated that various components come into play when it comes to parenting, such as one’s past experiences, tradition, religion, acculturation, etc. In terms of the social workers’ insights, some major findings included

their discussion of the use of standardized assessment tools when evaluating BAME parents’ parenting competence, the contribution of the social workers’ past experiences when it comes to being able to assess the parenting competence of BAME parents, the importance of keeping the concept of social justice (when it comes to the child) in mind when assessing parenting competence, etc.

As indicated, there is a vast amount of empirical support backing-up the information that is included in this book in the forms of journal articles, books, legislation, etc. This writer commends the author of the book for clearly investing such time and effort toward ensuring that so much of the information conveyed in this book is based on facts from a wide array of reliable, reputable sources.

In terms of this book’s applications to social work study and practice, there are many different ways in which the knowledge that is gained from this book can be advantageous for social work students of varying degree levels (e.g., in a generalist practice course, in a research-oriented course, in a diversity-related course, or in a policy-related course). Specifically, the book can assist students to be cognizant of their own biases and to continue working toward a higher level of cultural awareness. The book can also help social work practitioners with varying levels of experience/expertise who work with culturally diverse clients. For students or social workers who are interested in assessment toward individuals, parents, or families, this book could be helpful in terms of understanding the importance of methodical selection and application of assessment tools. Additionally, for students or social workers who study and/or work directly with BAME families, this book can be helpful when it comes to being more culturally sensitive and more culturally competent in appropriate contexts with these future clients. For students or social workers who are interested in policy and legislation as related to parenting, this book can provide helpful reminders of important criteria (e.g., relevant cultural and familial nuances) to keep in mind during these processes.

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