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This book was developed as a clinical primer to provide the reader with concrete examples of how to apply multiple family systems theories and techniques to stepfamily concerns using a single case study approach. Given the ongoing escalation in the numbers of stepfamilies, and the probability that clinicians, regardless of the setting of counseling practice, will experience growing numbers of stepfamily concerns in their clinical caseloads, the availability of multiple approaches to support stepfamily success will be a welcome resource. This is a practitioner book. It assumes the reader has basic knowledge of theory-based treatment planning, systems thinking, and family theory. The chapters build on those foundations by illustrating how clinicians from different modalities might address the issues facing our case study stepfamily.

Chapter 1 introduces the case study that is used in subsequent chapters to illustrate each theoretical approach. This chapter explains the advantages of using a single case study across diverse models. Chapters 2 through 8 apply specific models to this single case. Chapters 9 and 10 discuss ethics and diversity issues specific to counseling stepfamilies. Chapter 11 provides some concluding comments.

**One Stepfamily Case Study, Multiple Approaches Illustrated**

The repeated use of the same stepfamily to illustrate differing models provides a window into how each model could be of help and how to ascertain the best fit for the counselor and the presenting stepfamily and issue.
The application of theory-based treatment planning through the clinical lens of various family counseling approaches clarifies how experienced counselors conceptualize the case from their professional orientation. Contributions from practicing family counselors show how differing models do, and do not, work with differing stepfamily concerns in real life. The concluding advice for students and practitioners regarding each model comes not from theoreticians but from practitioners and is a valuable resource for those who seek to develop their family counseling skills.

The presentation and explanation of outcome data enables clinicians to establish best practices relative to their specific model of counseling. Reviewing these studies also provides those who would contribute to the growing professional knowledge with examples of how to design and implement such research.

Each chapter author reflects on the efficacy of the clinical intervention through the lens of the following two questions: (1) What factors of client diversity influence your choice of interventions with your stepfamily clients? and (2) How do these factors influence your clinical service delivery?

**Target Audience**

This book demonstrates how clinical experts working with different family systems models would approach a single family case study. The text provides new and experienced clinicians with a professional resource guide that no other publication can match. The intended target audience includes all counselors and mental health professionals seeking to provide understanding, legitimization, and facilitation of stepfamily development. This book is intended for clinical development purposes; therefore, its utility transcends specific training programs or settings and is a valued contribution to clinicians’ professional libraries. This is a practical handbook for professionals in their graduate training programs and for counselors, social workers, psychologists, and marriage and family therapists who count stepfamilies among their caseload.
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I must acknowledge the outpouring of interest from clinicians when I posted a request for authors on CESNET for this, my first edited book. The value of this book is directly tied to the academic strength and clinical expertise of its contributors. I appreciate their willingness to offer their individual expertise and to adhere to the organizational and administrative protocols for this project.

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