economics and the free market were concerned’. Interesting examples of how such conflict showed itself include discussion of ‘the ambivalent attitude to single mothers with respect to whether they should enter the labour market or stay at home on benefits’ (p. 180).

Occasional shafts of acerbic personal opinion make this an entertaining as well as informative read, and there is a sense by the end of the book that the discipline of measured analysis is increasingly overtaken by the author’s own forthright views. A careful discussion of how child poverty in Conservative Britain ‘was higher than any other country in the EU and the industrialised countries.’ (p. 181) goes without explicit comment, but the final chapter is studded with flourishes such as this: ‘Thatcher had allowed a rampant selfishness to become respectable, thereby undermining all notions of responsibility and restraint’ (p. 238).

New Labour’s approach to children and families gets equally close scrutiny and uncompromising judgement. The Third Way, for example, is discussed in detail and ultimately characterized as seeing children as ‘social investments and human capital rather than young people whose personal welfare has intrinsic value’ (p. 200).

Analysis of the current administration’s philosophy and practice with regard to youth justice elicits the comment: ‘The eagerness with which New Labour has sought to lock up young people is perhaps one of its most disgraceful features. Moreover, locking children up goes against the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. . . . Under the terms of the 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act it is likely that ever more young people will be remanded in locked institutions’ (p. 230).

Child Welfare is an accessible, informative and thought-provoking text, and should be read by all with an interest in contemporary policy, its historical context, and the challenges presented by such a writer.

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**Handbook of Domestic Violence Intervention Strategies: Policies, Programs, and Legal Remedies,**

Albert R. Roberts (ed.),


This edited volume aims to familiarize practitioners in medical, legal, mental health and social work fields with ‘the most promising and effective policies, programs, intervention strategies, and legal remedies for dealing with domestic violence’ (p. ix). To this end, it brings together chapters by North American professionals and academics working within the broad realm of domestic violence.
violence. The book is organized into five wide-ranging sections, including a general introduction. Within the initial section, contributors debunk common myths of domestic violence, present overviews of theoretical understandings of the dynamics of domestic violence and review empirical findings on front line services and other responses to domestic violence. These chapters will be valuable for professionals in non-specialist agencies who assist service users experiencing domestic violence and wish to expand their understanding of this issue. Other sections include contributions on legal responses, addiction and mental health treatments, crisis intervention and issues for black and minority ethnic women.

Broadly speaking, the organizational layout of this book focuses, first, on criminal and civil law responses to perpetrators and, secondly, on the health and recovery needs of survivors and their children. This effectively dichotomizes the responses to violent incidents into very separate spheres of practice. There is scant attention paid to the difficulties social workers face in crafting appropriate responses that combine the services offered by legal and health professionals. While no seamless approach to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention exists, this book fails to conceptualize the possibility of such a perspective.

This legal–health dichotomy may be indicative of contributors’ grounding in North American models of domestic violence practice. As such, much of the information contained in this book may not be directly applicable for those working in a UK context. For some practitioners this may be a strength. Because the chapters in this book reflect developments and trends in American and Canadian domestic violence practice, British practitioners may find that this volume provokes new and different ways of thinking about domestic violence work. In this sense, the volume will be a valuable tool, providing a refreshing lens from which to look at increasingly entrenched practices—as long as there is recognition of areas that are not directly transmissible to the UK context.

The most striking weakness of this volume is the lack of attention to those components of domestic violence that do not involve physical violence. While many of the chapters address the mental health needs of survivors, the focus on mental health treatment tends to medicalize the needs of survivors. There has been a great deal of debate in British literature on domestic violence about the role of psychological counselling and therapy and the appropriateness of diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This debate is not reflected in this volume; British practitioners may find it lacking. This point raises the wider issue that the volume will have value to practitioners in both statutory and voluntary agencies, but it should be read critically and carefully.

The chapters in this volume vary widely in depth, with some providing broad overviews of particular aspects of domestic violence practice and others giving very detailed information. This unevenness of depth can be considered both a strength and a weakness of the book making some chapters irrelevant to many social work practitioners, with others striking issues which should be at the
heart of their domestic violence intervention. Several chapters tackle the particulars of very specific reforms and technologies, for example research on risk assessment tools in child protection and the use of new information technology in the court system. On the other hand, other chapters contain extremely useful overviews of current issues, including outreach programmes, perpetrator intervention and specialist services for survivors who may find mainstream domestic violence services problematic. The chapter on services for chemically dependent women, in particular, stands out in the way it summarizes the literature as well as addressing the complexities of practice across agencies with very different intervention approaches.

The scope of the book and the issues that the authors tackle make it a helpful resource for professionals working with survivors of domestic violence. Many of the contributors use data from their own qualitative research and include the voices of survivors, which gives an additional depth to the volume. Authored by academics and dedicated domestic violence practitioners, this book reflects the experience and passion of the authors about the work they do and the changes in domestic violence practice that they have witnessed and with which they have been involved.

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Parenting and Disability,
Richard Olsen and Harriet Clarke,

British social policy has tended to assume that effective parenting is a reflection of the individual skills and abilities of particular parents. But Parenting and Disability suggests that this narrow, individualistic approach may be unable to grasp the key social dynamics which facilitate effective parenting by disabled people. By distinguishing between the social role of ‘parent’ and the physical tasks associated with parenting, Olsen and Clarke apply a social model of disability to this topic, and highlight the important mediating role of disability supports in this process. Disabled parents face many unique barriers in raising children and this book helps to shift the debate away from the inabilities of disabled parents, towards the availability of adequate technological, financial, emotional and practical support.

Olsen and Clarke argue that the literature on disability and parenting has inadequately engaged with the social model of disability and has commonly reflected prejudicial stereotypes about the incapacities of disabled people as parents. Such prejudices have led previous studies on parenting and disability to highlight the supposed long-term negative outcomes for children which are assumed to stem from the impaired capacities of the parent. Olsen and Clarke