BOOK REVIEWS

The Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills, Third Edition
Linda Kohlman Thomson, MOT, OTR, CACD, FAOTA (1993)
American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., 1383 Piccard Drive, PO Box 1725, Rockville, MD 20849-1725
72 pages, $25.00 (AOTA member), $36.00 (nonmember).

It is well known that developing an evaluation instrument is a long-term project. Linda Kohlman Thomson has demonstrated the persistence needed to develop an instrument and follow it through the collection of data necessary for standardization. This third edition of The Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills describes the progress of the 6 years the author has contributed to the development of this often-used evaluation tool.

This instrument is useful in diverse areas of occupational therapy practice. It is structured to collect information about a person’s ability to live independently as indicated by knowledge and skills in self-care, safety and health, money management, transportation and telephone, and work and leisure. Under each of these major categories, the author presents functional tasks and self-reports of performance that help to define levels of ability. Self-care, for example, is assessed by observation of appearance and self-report of frequency of self-care activities.

The tasks outlined in this edition of the instrument are very similar (identical in some areas) to those in previous editions of the instrument. Although the refinements to test administration presented in this addition are subtle, they reflect current indicators of function. For example, the list of criteria for appearance includes “open untreated sores.”

What have been masterfully improved are the organization and layout of the evaluation protocol and scoring. Each section pinpoints the overall evaluation method used, equipment needed, administration protocol and any acceptable alternate methods, and scoring criteria. The instructions are printed in bold to make administration easier. The orientation to the tool provides a total list of equipment needed for administration of the entire instrument. This enables the therapist to easily gather the necessary items together into a test administration kit, if desired. The color photographs appear on hard stock, suitable for repeated use of the instrument. The worksheets for each subtest are ready for duplication and use in repeated administrations of the instrument. The manual is well organized, easy to administer, and user-friendly.

A major strength of this edition of the Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills is the presentation of research on the instrument. It presents six reliability and validity studies conducted by the author and others. Concurrent validity was examined with the Global Assessment Scale and the Bay Area Functional Performance Evaluation. The ability of the instrument to predict levels of independence in community living was investigated by the author.

Although they are preliminary and inconclusive studies, the research presented does demonstrate research approaches useful in standardizing this instrument. With this edition of her evaluation, Thomson again seeks the assistance of therapists across the country to share their results of using the instrument with different populations.

The usefulness of the instrument to occupational therapy intervention and discharge planning, coupled with the continued efforts of the author to standardize the instrument, speaks to its relevance to the profession. It is recommended for all areas of practice positioned to evaluate knowledge and skills in independent living.

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Educating Patients and Families About Mental Illness: A Practical Guide
Cynthia Carson Bisbee, PhD (1991)
Aspen Publishers, Inc., 7201 McKinney Circle, PO Box 990, Frederick, MD 21701-9782
445 pages, $85.00.

This 445-page manual is published in an easy-to-use 3-ring binder. Bisbee has taken a practical approach to heart in the design of this manual, with its clear, descriptive text, well-referenced chapters for the person who wants primary sources of information, and usable, reproducible handouts and overheads.

In the introduction, Bisbee outlines the philosophy that guided the development of this tool—that serious mental illness is debilitating to individuals and a severe stressor to their families, and that information about mental illness can facilitate the development of coping skills for people with mental illnesses and their families. Such an educational approach can then be offered to complement other treatment, rehabilitative, and management approaches.

The guide is divided into four parts: Part I—Introduction; Part II—Patient Education Course Plans; Part III—Family Education Course Plans; and Part IV—Appendixes and Index. Part I offers information on background and the historical context of health education in mental health settings, discusses biopsychosocial and educational models of care provision, and offers tips on educating persons with mental illness and their families. It addresses methodological concerns related to implementation of patient and family education programs.

Part II includes a topic-by-topic curriculum that can be used by the therapist. Each topic includes a description of the topic, objectives of each session, a list of materials needed, an outline of the content, notes for the instructor, and reproducible handouts and overheads. Topics in this section include an orientation to patienthood; understanding mental illness; medications; self-monitoring; relapse prevention; healthy lifestyles; hazards of substance abuse; stress management; daily coping; communicating; family interactions; community resources; and content related to each of the three major forms of mental illness—schizophrenia, depression, and bipolar disorder.

Part III addresses such topics as family education; understanding mental illness and the causes of mental illness; psychosocial treatment; rights, responsibilities and roles of the family, patient, and professionals; monitoring and relapse prevention; therapeutic home en-