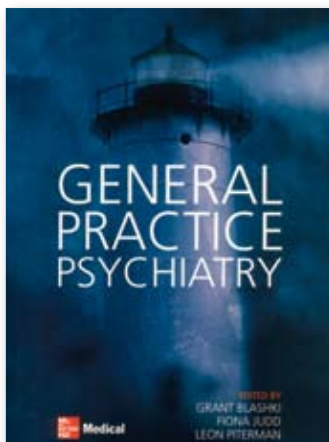


General Practice Psychiatry

Grant Blashki, Fiona Judd, Leon Piterman, editors

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Many readers of *Australian Family Physician* with an interest in mental health would know of the editors of *General Practice Psychiatry* – Grant Blashki, Fiona Judd and Leon Piterman – through the *Masters of General Practice Psychiatry* course and numerous short courses. *General Practice Psychiatry* is a collaboration between general practitioners and mental health experts who have substantial experience working with and training GPs. It is no surprise therefore that the GP perspective shines through and each section reflects the realities of general practice mental health care: from the difficulties of undifferentiated physical and psychological presentations, patterns of presentations that do not fit neatly into DSM classifications, physical and psychological comorbidities and time constraints to the benefits of ongoing relationships over time with patients, their friends and families, understanding of local supports and patient preference, ease of access, and lack of stigma associated with general practice mental health care.

General Practice Psychiatry is clearly and logically set out. Case studies and key points are included with each chapter so that for the time poor reader, the main points are made clear and the GP can then delve more deeply into the sections that are most clinically relevant at the time.

The first section of the book details practical issues relating to management of mental health problems in the GP setting, including consumers views of mental health problems and general practice psychiatry, legal issues, cross cultural and indigenous issues. Showing an awareness that managing patients' mental health concerns places particular stress on the GP, and that GPs themselves are not immune from mental illness and often demonstrate poor help seeking behaviour; the second chapter of the book is devoted to GP self care. The common thread

running through this section is that others do not necessarily see mental health or mental illness through the viewfinder as we do (and in fact our view of mental illness in ourselves often differs from our view of it in our patients). The chapter on indigenous issues opens with an ancient Maori proverb, '*Te whare e kitea, te kokonga ngakau e kore e kitea*', which translates as, 'Things are not always as they seem'. This is always worth bearing in mind in general practice psychiatry.

The next section deals with psychiatric assessment and an overview of common psychiatric disorders in the general practice setting: depression, anxiety, substance abuse, somatisation, psychoses and eating disorders. Following is a section on mental health problems relating to age group: childhood, adolescence and old age.

The final section deals with therapeutics: psychological interventions and pharmacological interventions. The chapter on medications takes a very practical GP friendly approach with sections such as: 'starting an antidepressant', 'things to tell the patient', how and when to increase the dose' and useful tables of usual doses, side effect profiles and withdrawal symptoms. There are chapters devoted to managing difficult behaviours and managing grief and loss.

Overall, *General Practice Psychiatry* is an excellent resource for GPs, registrars and students to either read cover to cover, or keep on the shelf to dip into when the clinical need arises.

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