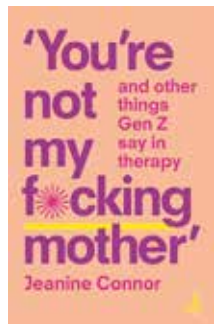




Edited by Jeanine Connor. To join our panel of book reviewers, please email therapytoday@thinkpublishing.co.uk



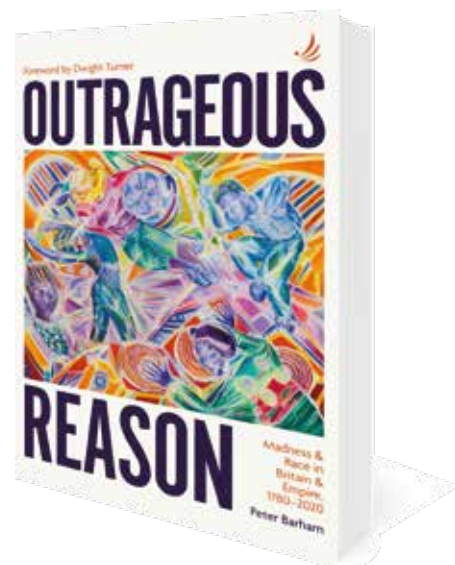
'You're Not My F*cking Mother' and other things Gen Z say in therapy
Jeanine Connor
(PCCS Books)

Generation Z – broadly those currently between 12 and 27 – is struggling, according to psychodynamic psychotherapist and author Jeanine Connor. Those of us either parenting or working with young people will recognise this assessment, and the profound effect that the 'permacrisis' (including the pandemic, social media, climate change and the political landscape) is having on Gen Z's mental health and wellbeing.

In this series of clinical stories, Connor delves deep into her work with this age group. The book opens with a 'real-life' infant observation, as she recounts her feelings and experiences observing a baby and his family, and how it informed her practice. And it closes with a beautiful chapter about gardening, and how it links with psychotherapy, titled 'For tomorrow' after a Blur song. The chapters in between are fictional stories. The exchanges between client and therapist are what I find most interesting. We are introduced to eight clients, including an adolescent whose GCSEs were cancelled because of COVID-19 and who is now about to sit A-levels; a young woman whose mother doesn't understand her job as a social media influencer; and a 13-year-old who needs help navigating puberty without a mother.

Connor writes with compassion and sensitivity, interweaving theory and practice, and effortlessly bringing to life complex psychoanalytic concepts, which makes this book of interest to trainees, experienced therapists, parents and of course Gen Z themselves. Her wide-ranging references are woven into the fabric of the text: Freud, Winnicott and Bion sit alongside Blur lyrics, Jarvis Cocker quotes and feminist theory. Impressively, no prior knowledge is assumed, whether of Gen Z culture, social media or psychotherapy, all of which is explained in a compelling, accessible way.

Emmanuelle Smith,
psychodynamic psychotherapist



Eating Disorders Don't Discriminate: stories of illness, hope and recovery from diverse voices
Chukwuemeka Nwuba and Bailey Spinn (eds)
(Jessica Kingsley)

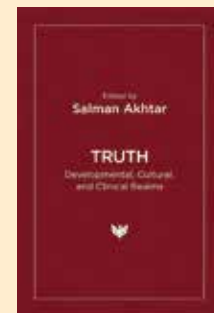
Are we aware of the myriad presentations of eating disorders or do we, like many, tend to see them predominantly as the problem faced by thin, white, cisgender girls? This book tells the stories of a range of people who do not fit the stereotype and, because of this, either did not realise they had a disorder or were unable to find help until they were firmly in its grip.

The book is split into sections detailing five of the eating disorders listed in *DSM-5*: binge eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder and other specified feeding and eating disorders. A final section briefly touches on links with muscle dysmorphia and autism. A theme that runs throughout is the relief people felt when they understood and could name their problem and realised they were not alone. For most, getting support was difficult, and there was a wish for a more diverse range of professionals and an understanding of the diets of different cultures.

A similar theme runs through the stories, of how coping strategies developed into full-blown eating disorders, which one person described as a 'carousel in hell'. However, these stories are about people who stepped off the carousel, keeping hope as a predominant theme. My only criticism of the book is that it lacks detail about the different treatments that have been successful. However, it is a good book for anyone interested in learning more about eating disorders.

Rachael Sharrad MBACP, child and adolescent psychotherapist

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Truth: developmental, cultural, and clinical realms
Salman Akhtar (ed)
(Karnac)

Salman Akhtar, a notable academic and poet, has put together a wide range of contributions from 12 authors from the US and Israel, all practising in the psychoanalytic field. The book presents perspectives of truth derived from studies, research and clinical practice in childhood, adolescence, later life and cultural viewpoints. Reading the book, people might conclude that the truth can be seen as an account of a person's experience, but the way in which the listener hears and interprets that account, and the things to which we give the most attention, are likely to influence both the way in which we might approach the client and our therapeutic interventions.

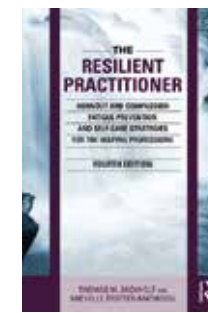
The contributing authors write with academic terminology and authority. Each provides sustaining food for thought. For example, Richard Waugaman, clearly a keen archivist and researcher in Shakespeare's life and work, draws on his explorations to expound the psychology of pseudonymity in supporting Freud's theory that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the works of Shakespeare, based on the discovery of de Vere's annotated copy of Sternhold and Hopkins' *Whole Book of Psalms*, which is repeatedly echoed in Shakespeare's work.

This book's academic stance would be of particular interest to researchers and readers working in the psychoanalytic field, and although for me the language used was not easy reading, it offered both information and challenges to my present understanding of the truth. Waugaman ends his chapter with a quote from Emily Dickinson's poem 'Tell all the truth but tell it slant', which may be a good motto for practitioners: 'The truth must dazzle gradually / Or every man be blind.'

Dr Barbara Mitchels FBACP (Snr Accred), psychotherapist

'A similar theme runs through the stories, of how coping strategies developed into full-blown eating disorders, which one person described as a "carousel in hell"'

Rachael Sharrad MBACP



The Resilient Practitioner
Thomas M Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison
(Routledge)

This is the fourth edition of this exploration of burnout and compassion fatigue, a skilfully curated treasure

trove of theory, practitioner insights, client vignettes and exercises for self-reflection. As well as being established academics and private practitioners, the authors are also talented writers, making for an engaging read.

This is far more than a book about self-care – resiliency is explored within the context of practitioner development and effectiveness, a subject that Skovholt has researched throughout his career. I felt like chapter five, 'Hazards of practice' – a sobering summary of the reasons why there will always be clients that we fail to help – should be required reading before any would-be therapist embarks on

training. Every chapter ends with reflective exercises and there is much to reflect on, including a chapter on co-dependency in the caring professions. The chapter on the characteristics of highly resilient practitioners based on recent research, new to this edition, was also a highlight.

Although much of the research and vignettes are therapy specific, the book is written for a range of caring professionals, including social workers, teachers and clergy. I appreciated being reminded that we are not the only professionals who – as the authors put it – use our 'own self as a method of change'. Although it may have more obvious appeal to students and the newly qualified, there is also much here of value for experienced practitioners. It is a book I will dip into whenever I feel in need of a boost in professional confidence.

Sally Brown MBACP, integrative therapist



Grandmotherland: exploring the myths and realities
Judith Edwards (Karnac)

Edwards is a child and adolescent psychotherapist with, it says in her bio, an interest in the links between psychoanalysis, culture and the arts, and a desire to make psychoanalytic ideas accessible to a wider audience. This book is testament to those aims. Written in a conversational style, I felt as if I was riding through a mystical 'grandmotherland' with Edwards from the off.

Her book is couched in 35 years of experience working with families from diverse cultures. She encourages us to look beneath family norms and wonder about the way that myth turns to history, turns to myth. The tropes of grandmother as 'Heffalump', crone, big bad wolf and crazy old woman in a rocking chair and 'off her rocker' are explored.

Edwards questions the dichotomy of great sorrow or great relief at not being a grandmother. She shares stories from an artist, an educator, a queer woman and a yoga teacher who have found fulfilling alternatives to 'the pram in the hall'. Alienation and estrangement are explored, as is the case when parents split and parent-in-laws might get pushed out of their grandchildren's lives. The book closes with Edwards' story about her own grandmother, a relationship that probably ignited her desire to write this book in the first place. Edwards insists this isn't a 'how to be a good grandmother' book, but it is, I would argue, a 'how to think about grandmothers' book – and it is wonderful.

Jeanine Connor MBACP, psychodynamic psychotherapist