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Book Review: Mental Health and Deafness by Margaret Du Feu and Cathy Chovaz

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Du Feu, Margaret, and Cathy Chovaz. *Mental Health and Deafness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xvi + 296 pages. Paperback, \$43.95.

Mental Health and Deafness provides a comprehensive yet detailed overview of the issues surrounding deafness and mental health for hard-of-hearing individuals as well as mental health researchers and practitioners. Dr. Margaret Du Feu, a consultant psychiatrist, and Dr. Cathy Chovaz, a professor in the departments of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario, bring extensive theoretical, clinical and personal experience to their book. Both of the authors have experienced deafness as adults and they currently communicate using sign language as well as spoken language.

Du Feu and Chovaz describe the historical and social context of deafness, and narrate the life journey of deaf individuals. They provide information about a child's way of accepting his/her deafness, about parents' reactions to their child's deafness, about language acquisition, and about mental health issues prevalent in childhood, adolescence, adulthood and later life. The book not only provides in-depth information regarding the lives of hard-of-hearing individuals but the case studies provided by the authors help the reader to fully understand this information.

The book is also a journey through the historical developments in the area of assessment and treatment. Chovaz and Du Feu highlight the need for appropriate assessment tools and respective intervention plans for deaf individuals because of the differences in their symptoms and co-morbidities. For example, it helps to understand the difference between an intellectual disability and the significance of delayed language acquisition. In addition, the authors have exceptionally differentiated between the symptoms related to mental health shown by hearing individuals and those presented by deaf individuals. The distinction between the two is essential for a mental health practitioner to know so that s/he could do a proper assessment and devise a relevant intervention or treatment plan.

In the book, Du Feu and Chovaz also highlight legal issues concerning deaf individuals. They discuss legal matters such as ownership of property, wills and informed consent. Legal matters are very important due to certain vulnerabilities of deaf and mentally ill persons. They are often misunderstood individuals and they may be exploited. Finally, the authors conclude the book by highlighting the scope and developments occurring in intervention and service development. Emphasis is placed on the provision of adequate mental health service centres, and making sure that hard-of-hearing individuals have equal access to mental health services.

Mental Health and Deafness is a valuable resource. It provides considerable information not only for hard-of-hearing individuals and their care-givers, but also for professionals in the fields of education, psychology, social work, and medicine. It is also an important resource for any social science researchers interested in expanding their knowledge about deafness and mental health. Overall, the book is comprehensive and insightful as it develops a complete understanding of deafness, mental illness, and the issues surrounding them.

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