



Book Review

Vital Practice, stories from the healing arts: the homeopathic and supervisory way

Ryan, S. (2004) Sea change Portland UK

www.seachangeuk.com

by Seamus Barry *

The publication of this work by EAS member Sheila Ryan is to be welcomed. I must confess that I know very little about homeopathy, although in the small village where I live, there are some practitioners in the surrounding area.

At the end of the introduction Ryan raises the possibility about “a homeopathic way of relating?”, “a homeopathic way of supervising?” and “a supervisory way of doing homeopathy?”. The author goes on to tell seven “stories from the healing arts” that emphasizes on the fact that “homeopathy is a narrative therapy” (p.24).

Ryan: “A supervisor, or supervisory aspect of the self, is concerned with the stories we tell in practice: clients bring stories. A ‘case’ is a practitioners story about a client or patient. Every healing modality comes with its own stories, including maps and traditions. Supervision is a process by which we re-write the stories we are ‘stuck’ in. In attending to the bigger stories, our universal ones, the supervisory quality of looking helps us to see where we have been and where we might go next” (p.24).

Ryan masterfully traces the homeopathic relationship and the homeopathic way of doing supervision through the seven stories outlined in her book. Along the way there are interesting exercises and activities to do which help integrate theory and practice and which beneficial also to practitioners who are not homeopathic practitioners. Ryan’s style of writing is lively and personal and adds rather than detracts from the enjoyment of reading the book. It also brings to life both the creative process and the synthesis of much learning which one encounters in her book.

The last chapter of the book called “Vital Kit” gives additional information to assist in the supervisory practice, which also proves highly useful and informative.

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