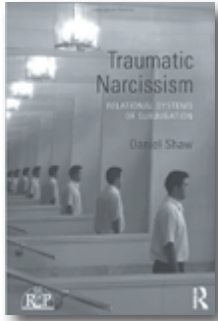


BOOK REVIEWS

Books Written by NYSSCSW Members

Reviewed by Helen Hinckley Krackow, LCSW, BCD



Traumatic Narcissism— Relational Systems of Subjugation

By Daniel Shaw
Routledge Press, 2014, pp.167

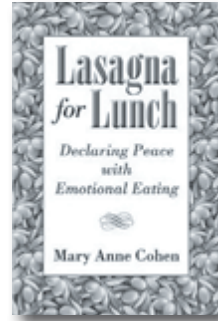
Daniel Shaw, LCSW, a training analyst at the National Institute for the Psychotherapies, has written an illuminating work on traumatic narcissism that fully describes the personality structure of narcissists, their victims, and the relationships over which these abusers often reign.

Shaw addresses the treatment of victims using Ferenzi's analytic love and relational analytic techniques. The great strengths of the book are the generous number of clinical examples, transcripts of actual treatment sessions, and personal material from the author's life.

Shaw spent many years as a member and an administrator of a cult based on spirituality and yoga. During his post-cult analysis, he developed a deep understanding of the narcissistic dyad. He was able to separate from the cult as he began to recognize the cult leader's abusiveness toward others.

Shaw's experience regarding the dynamics that enable members to leave these groups rings very true to me. I have had a number of clients who left political, religious, psychotherapeutic, and sexual orientation cults, and the influence of abusive cult leaders. Like most clinicians, I also work with many clients who were victimized by narcissistic family members. I believe Shaw's work will be helpful to therapists in resolving this dominance, freeing our patients in the process.

Shaw draws an accurate picture of vulnerability to the dominating narcissist, who is, in fact, quite dependent on his admiring followers or partners. He also offers a rich chapter on couples treatment. His discussion in the last chapter, on the nature of analytic love in healing narcissistic wounds, is valuable for all therapists.



Lasagna for Lunch— Declaring Peace with Emotional Eating

By Mary Anne Cohen
New Forge Press, 2013, pp. 346

This is a superb text for both eating disordered clients and the psychotherapists who treat them. Mary Anne Cohen, LCSW, BCD, has written a work that is both scholarly and accessible. The founder of the New York Center for Eating Disorders (EmotionalEating.org), Cohen has specialized in the treatment of eating disorders for over 40 years, helping women, men, and adolescents recover from binge eating, chronic dieting, bulimia, anorexia, and body image dissatisfaction. Complex treatment issues are clearly illustrated in her book, with many clinical examples drawn from her practice and from her personal life. She richly demonstrates her warm and empathic therapeutic style with patients. I found the many footnotes and annotations helpful as well.

As I write this review, I think about my work over the past week and how many of my clients have referred to their struggles with emotional eating. One man, feeling more at peace than he has in some time, reported that he stopped consuming his habitual pint of ice cream at midnight. In contrast, another client is a woman who gained 50 pounds over the course of the year, while her mother was dying. She recently rejoined Overeaters Anonymous, but she must continue to work through her grief as well. A third client is a 20-year-old who is struggling for an adult life and an adult woman's body.

So much pain is enacted through the body because we do not have words for it. Cohen's work is very helpful in this regard, particularly her chapters on grief, body image in our society, abuse, addictive behaviors, and pathological attachments. She also includes very fresh material on impasses and client resistance. I urge you to read this book, written by a clinician who is a credit to clinical social work.

Helen Hinckley Krackow is a former president of the Society. She chairs the state Mentorship and Newsletter committees, and co-leads a practice committee on The Older Clinician and the Older Client.