

**Clinician's Thesaurus: The Guide to Conducting Interviews and Writing Psychological Reports (6<sup>th</sup> edition).**

Edward L. Zuckerman. New York: Guilford Press ([www.guilford.com](http://www.guilford.com)). 2005, 379 pp., \$42.00 (paperback).

Dr. Zuckerman could have justifiably entitled this extraordinary book "The Clinician's Handbook". The *Clinician's Thesaurus* is much more than a thesaurus-- it's more like a comprehensive guide for client assessment and report writing. Zuckerman has done a remarkable job at creating an extremely valuable and easy-to-use resource for seasoned clinicians and students alike.

The *Clinician's Thesaurus* is organized into three main parts. Part One outlines, in detail, the principal components of a mental health interview. Zuckerman skillfully provides the reader with hundreds of sample questions designed to obtain the information necessary for generating an adequate formulation of clients' problems. The first two chapters cover topics such as recognizing possible communication difficulties, obtaining informed consent, eliciting presenting problems, assessing the client's understanding of his or her problem, and assessing cognitive functioning and mental status. The third chapter more directly addresses symptoms, signs, and non-pathological behaviors and phenomena. Topics are arranged alphabetically, and questions are listed under their respective topics. Topics range from spousal/elder abuse and neglect to depression to suicide and self-destructive behavior.

In Part Two, Zuckerman adeptly walks the reader through each step of the report writing process, providing practical guidelines for how to utilize information collected from the interview (or any other source) to create an informed, well-written report. This section of the book contains a useful collection of suggestions along with thousands of sample terms, phrases, and statements. Chapters are well organized, making it easy for readers to locate relevant topics.

Part Two is divided into four subsections. The first subsection covers how to present preliminary data (e.g., identifying information, reliability statements, reasons for referral) and background information (e.g., history of presenting problem(s), medical and past psychiatric history, developmental history). The second subsection covers and greatly simplifies the often-tedious task of sufficiently and accurately describing clients as they present in the evaluation. Topics touched upon include behavioral observations, behavior related to specific features of the evaluation, self-presentation, mood/affect, and cognitive functioning. Two chapters are specifically devoted to the presentation of DSM-IV-TR disorders and other clinical phenomena, including maladaptive personality patterns. DSM codes, risk factors, prognostic indicators, assessment measures, and diagnostic schema are mentioned. The third subsection comprises chapters on how to effectively present client functioning (e.g., basic ADLs, social functioning, work/academic functioning, coping ability). The final subsection deals with summarizing findings, generating a multiaxial DSM-IV diagnosis, making recommendations, composing prognostic statements and, finally, closing the report.

In Part Three, Zuckerman provides the reader with a compilation of useful resources. Resources include a guide for treatment planning; templates for evaluations, reports, and therapy notes; an index of references of treatments for specific disorders and concerns; a listing of common psychiatric medications; and a chapter on medical causes of psychiatric symptoms. The book concludes with a list of common abbreviations and suggested readings.

Overall, the *Clinician's Thesaurus* is very well written, notably reader-friendly, and jam-packed with useful suggestions and information. Zuckerman managed to write an exceptionally

comprehensive volume without sacrificing clarity or cohesion. Experienced and beginning clinicians alike will undoubtedly benefit from making the *Clinician's Thesaurus* an integral part of their library.

Jon D. Rogove, M.A.  
*American Institute for Cognitive Therapy*  
*New York, NY*  
*Fairleigh Dickinson University*  
*Teaneck, NJ*