



## Book Review

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### Understanding Troubled Minds

Sidney Bloch

Melbourne University Press

Second edition fully revised, 2011

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I also enjoyed Chapter 5 on stress, crisis and coping. The concept of defence mechanisms is outlined in just over two pages. The topic has clearly been penned by someone who knows his subject. A book on this topic could only succeed if someone who has mastered his or her topic writes it. This is a wonderful addition to any library. Get a copy today.



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#### Reviewed by:

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This is an excellent book. Although it has been written for a lay readership it has a great deal to offer any medical or paramedical professional. I only wish it had been written several years ago when I was first introduced to the concept of mental illness as a medical student. Indeed it should be required reading for any budding health professional. Chapter 4 describes the work of the psychiatrist offering a delightfully simple and logical framework to formulate mental illness. I remember being introduced to similar frameworks as a student and yet here it is presented in a way that is accessible to any reader.

The book has been written for a lay readership and is not replete with jargon and psychobabble which unfortunately characterises so many medical text books. Some of these, I have it on good authority are used to treat insomnia. Nonetheless this is not a trashy coffee table work full of pretty pictures. Bloch takes a breath taking tour of the history of psychiatry and psychiatric illness. The subject is covered from the perspective of specific medical disorders but also disorders as they impact on children, women and older adults. I respectfully suggest that the authors may have included a specific chapter on mental illness as it impacts on men.

As a general practitioner I turned immediately to chapter on mood disorders if only because I spend a great deal of time in my clinical practice consulting people with depression. This for me was the acid test if the book had failed to satisfy me on this topic it was destined for the bin. However the description of the condition is lucid, succinct, accurate and surprisingly detailed. I especially like the liberal use of case studies in this and other chapters. It brings the condition to life in a way that makes the complexities much easier to understand.