

BOOK REVIEW:
MULTIPLE
PERSÖNLICHKEITEN:
ÜBERLEBENDE EXTREMER
GEWALT, EIN HANDBUCH
by MICHAELA HUBER, PH.D.

Reviewed by
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Michaela Huber, Ph.D. (1995). *Multiple Persönlichkeiten: Überlebende extremer Gewalt, Ein Handbuch*. Frankfurt, Germany: Fischer.

In her German-language book, *Multiple Persönlichkeiten: Überlebende extremer Gewalt, Ein Handbuch*, (*Multiple Personalities: Survivors of Extreme Violence, A Handbook*), the author, Michaela Huber, a licensed psychologist and journalist by profession, took on two difficult tasks. One was to bring the concept of dissociation forward again into an area where the presently prevalent model of "schizophrenia" was developed and is leading to an over-diagnosis of schizophrenic disorders. The other task was to cover this scientific theme in a way that interested a public that is developing a growing interest in the field of trauma in general (including the role played by Germany in recent history), and specifically the area of sequelae of child abuse.

Michaela Huber succeeded in both tasks. As a pioneer therapist with DID patients in Germany and former editor of the German equivalent of *Psychology Today*, she condensed the theme into twelve easy readable chapters without losing the practical details that neophyte therapists in the field and its survivors of trauma are searching for. Starting with a chapter on the etiology of DID, the book moves on to look at the spectrum of perpetrators, modern concepts of diagnosis, therapy strategies for DID, an outline of advanced levels of trauma-processing, and a consideration of post-integration therapy.

To illustrate this, case histories of survivors (written in italic type to give the readers the opportunity to bypass such sections and restrict their reading to the explanatory portions) are interwoven into the text. A complete chapter is dedicated to a penetrating exploration of the "normal-crazy" life that DID patients lead. It describes the hassles of everyday decision processes, the experience of losing time, and the ever-present fears that permeate relationships and that patients often find difficult to communicate. A nice selec-

tion of color-printed patient drawings at the book's center completes a portrait of the disorder as seen through the DID patient's eyes.

In a final chapter, Anne Jürgens, an associate in the author's group practice in Bielefeld, comments on American and Dutch clinical reports, and on her own experience in doing inpatient therapy with DID patients. Concluding are over forty pages of references and literature sources that comprise a solid scientific database about dissociative disorders.

All in all, this modern handbook gives a comprehensive, practical, and state-of-the-art overview of diagnosis and therapy of DID patients as well as an empathetic view on DID patients, who are often overlooked in Germany. No wonder the book sold almost 10,000 copies since its release in February of this year. A second printing was done recently. To the readers of *DISSOCIATION*, however, the book has a serious drawback: It is only available in German thus far. ■