

Book Review

The Child's Voice in Family Therapy:  
A Systemic Perspective

Carole Gammer, Ph.D.

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In her new book, to be published in English by W.W. Norton in November 2008, and already published in German (*Die Stimme des Kindes in der Familientherapie*, 2007, Carl Auer Verlag) and in French (*La voix de l'enfant dans la thérapie familiale*, 2005, Éditions Érès), Carole Gammer presents a method for achieving the optimal integration of children in family therapy sessions. She presents various techniques, based on a comprehensive systemic model which transcends the polarization around structural, strategic and postmodern narrative approaches.

Carole Gammer, clinical psychologist, lives in Paris and has been training therapists in the model she developed - phasic family therapy - for almost 3 decades in different European countries (Switzerland, Germany, France, Spain).

How to actively integrate children in therapy has been a central concern for Carole Gammer for many years. She presents many case examples demonstrating how to promote children to have a strong voice and participate in a constructive, age appropriate way in sessions.

For Dr. Gammer, there is no doubt: the best way to intervene in the family is a session with the whole family.

She highlights systemic and relational aspects of problems. Everybody makes their contribution to solve it.

Essential is that the families experiment with newly developed interactions around the problem, in the session “here and now”.

The book finishes with a systemic approach of two special themes: children with hyperactive behaviour and sibling relationships.

In a very clear way, Dr. Gammer shows “how to do it”. The techniques and strategies she presents, like dramatisation, interventions using video, and metaphors are well-known in other therapeutic contexts. She has an innovative and fresh way to utilising techniques from other therapeutic schools such as narrative, solution focused, cognitive-behavioural, multigenerational, psychodynamic and humanistic. She presents a modern integrative therapy model for families.

The book is a treasure chest of creative ideas for the family therapist on how to actively involve children of all ages in family therapy sessions.

Book review by

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