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Abused Women and Survivor Therapy: A Practical Guide for the Psychotherapist

Lenore E. A. Walker

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In this state-of-the art treatment manual, Lenore E. A. Walker contends that traditional psychotherapies for trauma victims have been insufficient in treating abused women. As the problem of violence against women continues to plague society, cutting across all demographic sectors, Walker describes critical modifications to traditional practice that will allow practitioners to work more effectively with female victims of abuse. These modifications result in an integrated compilation of the most successful assessment and intervention strategies, called "survivor therapy."

Abused Women and Survivor Therapy discusses the major forms of abuse experienced by women: rape and sexual assault, battering, sexual abuse by therapists, and discrimination/sexual harassment in the workplace. Walker examines the effects of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation on each form of abuse; discusses clinical considerations and treatment approaches; evaluates commonly used assessment instruments; and analyzes forensic issues in cases involving violence against women.

Walker maintains that successful treatment models must account for the specific impact of the various forms of abuse, the individual's unique psychological response to the world, the impact of traditional socialization of women and men, and therapist transference and counter transference. These considerations can be applied in the course of a therapy that seeks to re-empower abused women by helping them to regain their self-esteem, reestablish healthy relationships, and reclaim a sense of control and choice in their lives.

Abused Women and Survivor Therapy helps the newly trained as well as the experienced practitioner to identify, assess, and treat women who have been abused physically, sexually, or psychologically. It provides a touchstone by which future progress in research and practice with abused women can be measured.

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