

Book review

Working in teams (Better partnership working series)

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This book is one of the publications in the Better Partnership Working series which includes five “how to” books on partnership development and evaluation. Partnership is a typical UK word for collaborative arrangements in health and social care, and teamwork in such a context could accordingly be comprised by the multilabeled concept of integrated care [1].

The book commences with an introductory chapter about team definitions, types of teams and why teamworking is important within and between health and social care organisations. Among other things, the authors elaborate on the differences between a *team* and a *group*, which I find interesting, though I miss a conclusion on the distinctiveness about teams in comparison with groups. Having the title of the book in mind, such a clarification seems to be of crucial importance. Otherwise there is a risk of turning the term “team” into another buzzword in the contemporary society.

The following chapter is the theoretical framework of the book. The authors make a deserving presentation of research about achievement and determinants of teamworking. This is the foundation of the fourth chapter, which is the “how to” part of the book describing useful frameworks and concept for teamworking. Chapter 3 focuses on “hot topics and emerging issues”, which I find misplaced and to some extent also irrelevant for teamworking. The exploration of safety, which could be regarded as part of a quality domain, ought to be more clearly included in a theoretical framework as one of the supposed achievements of teamworking. Furthermore, the section about communication is very general and for that reason feels somewhat unrelated to the topic of the book. Decision making is also regarded as a “hot topic” by the authors. They make an interesting exploration on this subject, though I miss elaboration

on the situation when the team does not have the right to make important decisions, which for instance could be the case when structural service conditions need to be improved. The authority to take such decisions is more often than not placed in the team members’ home organisations.

The “how to” chapter is mainly founded on seven dimensions of effective partnership working. All dimensions have high relevance and are presented together with selected practical approaches to increase teamworking effectiveness. These guidelines are not only adapted to everyday team situations, they are also founded on research and thus in a way evidence based. In comparison to other, often more general, practical texts, this is the main strength of the book. A weakness is its limited size. To fully cover different aspects on teamworking in only 126 pages is impossible. Especially, I explicitly lack theory on multidisciplinary team building. For instance, the stages of forming, storming, norming and performing as presented by Daft [2] could have made a significant contribution to this subject. Furthermore, aspects on management and leadership, culture, outcomes for service users are elaborated in other books in the Better Partnership Working series, which, in turn, mean that the curious reader needs to do further reading of other books in the series.

Overall, this book provides an interesting and stimulating reading for those who build and work in multidisciplinary teams as well as for policy makers. The book, and the whole Better Partnership Working series, is primarily aimed at the UK. The need for teamworking exists also in other countries with integrated care arrangements, and the book can thus as well be inspirational and helpful for an international audience.

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