
This two-volume reference set exploring the human mind gets high marks for credibility and comprehensiveness. Editor Harold Pashler is a well-regarded psychologist who has gathered an impressive list of contributors providing “brief but authoritative entries covering all major disciplines concerned with the study of the mind” (xxix). The intended audience is college and university students studying cognitive science and related fields. For this reason, it fills a gap in the existing literature for this subject area. The volumes are of most use to students with a working knowledge of science.

The entries are appropriate in length and depth for reference books. The editor has presented 293 individual topics related to the human mind. Examples of topics covered are Apraxia, Cognitive Dissonance, Desirable Difficulties Perspective on Learning, Gesture and Language Processing, Placebo Effect, Development of Spatial Cognition, and Visual Imagery. The explanations are broken down into common approaches to the subject area: computational, cultural, evolutionary, philosophical perspectives, practical applications, and psychological research.

A strong point is the “Further Readings” list at the end of each entry. This can give a college student a list of additional resources to consider for their research topic. These are accessible from electronic subscription databases on most college and university campus libraries. The “See Also” list of terms after each entry provides more comprehensive information on a topic by referencing other relevant entries. There is consecutive pagination between volumes.

There is one design weakness. While there is consecutive pagination, the index for both volumes is in the back of Volume Two, making it difficult to quickly find entries in Volume One or make it easy to browse both volumes. The List of Entries found in the front matter of both volumes would have been more effective with the page number and volume number next to it for easy access.

In the ongoing struggle between print and electronic resources in libraries, print reference books will need to follow Pashler’s example of credibility and comprehensiveness to survive in the marketplace.—Terry Darr is Library Director at Loyola Blakefield in Towson, Maryland


Charles R. Figley has a long history of writing about issues related to trauma such as Treating Traumatic Stress Injuries in Military Personnel: An EMDR Practitioner’s Guide (Routledge, 2012), Helping Traumatized Families (Routledge, 2012), and Death And Trauma: The Traumatology Of Grieving (Series in Trauma and Loss) (Routledge, 1997) to name a few. So it makes sense that Figley would publish this reference work that fully encompasses the field of trauma. This work is intended to comprise the complete understanding of trauma worldwide throughout history with contributions from scholars worldwide.

The book defines trauma as “a sudden, potentially deadly experience, often leaving lasting, troubling memories” (xxiii). It does seem to cover the breadth of the field of trauma with entries appearing alphabetically by topic that include a diverse span such as: “Abortion,” “Bearing Witness to Trauma,” “Comstock Act,” “Date Rape/Acquaintance Rape,” “EMDR Theory,” “Hate Crimes,” “Military Trauma,” “Peacekeeping Missions,” “Role of Media in Managing Disasters,” and “Slavery and Forced Servitude.”

A Reader’s Guide is provided to categorize the entries with the largest sections being: “Children and Families,” “Crime and Law,” “Culture and Ethnicity,” “Ethics and Philosophy,” “Psychology and Psychiatry,” and “Traumatology and Trauma Recovery.” Each entry includes suggestions for further reading, related entries, and some include resources for victims.

Similar works by others include The Encyclopedia of Psychological Trauma (Ed. by Reyes, Elhai, & Ford, Wiley, 2008) and Doctor & Shiromoto’s The Encyclopedia of Trauma and Traumatic Stress Disorders (Facts on File Library of Health & Living, 2009). There is some overlap between The Encyclopedia of Psychological Trauma and the Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide but the former work is focused on the field of Psychology including entries on specific mental health disorders and treatments whereas the latter includes broader entries on more than one branch of knowledge.

With its wide array of topics related to the fields of Counseling, Psychology, Psychiatry, Social Work, Medicine, Nursing, Humanities, Politics, Public Health, and Criminal Justice, this work would benefit college and university libraries as well as medical school and law school libraries.—Rachael Elrod, Reference/Instruction Librarian, The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina.


The consequential and often lasting impact of major events over the past 500 years has helped to shape the