QUALITATIVE RESEARCH/BOOK REVIEWS

the method, it is folly to think that they are an easy alternative to one-to-one interviews. Focus groups can be expensive, time consuming and difficult to organise and conduct. However, strengths of the focus group method are flexibility, and the ability to gather information from several people at the same time. As such, this paper does not seek to give a recipe for running a successful focus group, but rather outlines issues for consideration when planning, conducting and analysing focus groups.

Statement on funding and competing interests

Funding. None identified.
Competing interests. None identified.

References


Book Reviews


The promise of an answer to the eternal question “Why do we fight?” and, possibly more importantly, “How we both can win”, drew me, a teenage daughter myself, immediately to Terri Apter’s latest work.

Throughout the teenage years, the relationship between mother and daughter changes, with new and unheard of levels of stress resulting in mothers and daughters being the child–parent pair that fight most often. Apter attempts to address why such tensions arise and helps to guide both mother and daughter in negotiating their new relationship.

I found that much of the advice was somewhat obvious. Any daytime television psychologist can tell you that with better communication and listening more carefully to the other person your relationship will improve. However, when you are actually in the intense situation of mother–daughter conflict the obvious can be the hardest thing to see. The objective voice of an outsider can be refreshing and enlightening. Apter writes from her perspective as mother of a teenage daughter and also from her memories of being a teenager herself, allowing her to tread carefully and sensitively. This results in a fresh, accepting and non-judgmental, truly helpful book.

I found the insight into mothers and people—women invaluable. I agree that as teenagers we can be consumed in our own world, obsessing over and revolving around ourselves. Being shown that our mothers have needs and weaknesses too was a welcome reminder. For example, in the chapter involving sex, “I know that already” mothers were portrayed as caring people who want to support us emotionally, as opposed to bitter women who want to suppress us physically.

Although I highly doubt that from now on all conflicts with my own mother will result in ‘mutual gain’, I do sincerely feel that I understand the reasons, motivations and ways in which we can move on and benefit from some of these fights in the future. Terri Apter has succeeded in writing a heartfelt, useful manual for those complicated and difficult relationships, which can be of immense help to mothers and daughters alike, as well as those who work closely with them like guidance teachers, nurses and general practitioners.

Reviewed by Catriona Harvey (aged 17 years) Student, Inverness, UK


This is a book about the ethical aspects of pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. The author is an associate professor of philosophy and writes from the feminist perspective. She looks at the adversarial and negative sides of the topic, such as unwarranted pregnancies, and also casts a philosophical eye over the whole spectrum of the reproductive process. Pregnancy is viewed as an important event in itself, not merely for its end result. There are fascinating topical areas such as the chapter discussing the moral status of the fetus. Here various authors are discussed and there is food for thought about one of the most difficult areas in reproductive health care. Inevitably in such a book, there is a chapter entitled ‘medicalised model of birth’. The author does, however, add, qualifying this chapter, acknowledging that there can be a useful place for medical intervention.

This book also reviews feminist philosophers’ writings on motherhood, and introduces the wide diversity of viewpoints. Well-referenced text demonstrates and analyses different standpoints. In this chapter the role of men is also introduced and examined according to different theories. Caring for young children is also subjected to philosophical analysis.

For a reader who is more used to reading about pregnancy, childbirth and childcare in the clinical, sociological or narrative literature this book makes a refreshing and welcome change. It gives an opportunity for the reader to think about these life-changing events from moral and ethical standpoints, and opens the mind to a new way of observing these common yet unique events in a woman’s life.

This book is of interest to anyone involved with reproductive health care, whether it be at policy, professional or personal level.

Reviewed by Susan Carr, MBChB Consultant in Community Gynaecology, Glasgow, UK