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Macdonald's "Teen substance use, mental health and body image: Practical strategies for support" (book review)

Jessica Shuck
Cornerstone University

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Book Reviews



Macdonald, I. (2019). *Teen substance use, mental health and body image: Practical strategies for support*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 142 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781785928673

Teen Substance Use, Mental Health and Body Image is a practical handbook aimed at school administrators, meant to provide approaches to mental health and substance use education for young adults (teens). While its target audience is specific, the author points out (p. 9) that these same strategies could also be applied in other settings involving children and young adults, stressing that schools should not be the only place where these issues are addressed and supported.

The author, Ian Macdonald, is a mental health advocate, with an education in sports sciences, public health, sociology, and teaching pedagogy. He has been a trainer for the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, which seeks to educate young adults on mental health issues, and a consultant for Mentor UK. He has extensive experience working with schools supporting the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education curriculum in the United Kingdom, where the focus of this book lies.

After three contextual chapters, which include introductions to the ‘whole school approach,’ current mental health and drug education policies in the UK, and some general theoretical models of adolescent health behaviors, the author divides the content into specific substance use and mental health issues. For example, chapter 7 focuses on illicit drugs. Other topics covered are alcohol, smoking, image and performance-enhancing drugs, energy drinks, and pharmacological cognitive enhancers. For each topic, the author gives a general description of the substance and the reality of its use in the UK. He then proceeds to provide practical approaches to educating students on the topic.

The concluding chapters (*Delivering Effective Mental Health and Drug Education in School* and *Developing Healthy and Positive Coping*) give a summation of the author’s idea that appropriate mental health and drug use education can prevent substance abuse. Throughout the book, but especially in these chapters, Macdonald focuses on the underlying needs of young adults and how to address those needs and support them as authority figures.

Throughout the book, Macdonald emphasizes the need for evidence-informed practices supported by research, and he backs this with an extensive reference list.

Teen Substance Use, Mental Health and Body Image is relatable and easy to read, making it a great introduction to the topic. While this title may not be one of use in scholarly academic research, it would be very beneficial for its intended audience of those working with children and young adults.

Reviewer

Jessica Shuck, Cornerstone University