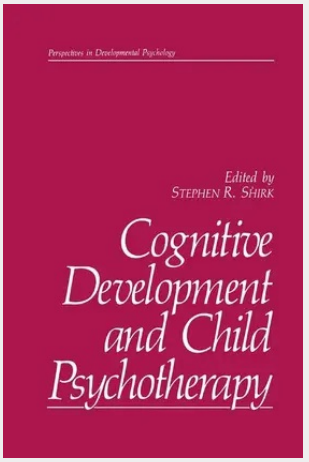
Shirk

Cognitive Development and Child Psychotherapy



Like hiking off the well-traveled trail, attempting to bridge foreign do mains of research and practice entails certain risks. This volume repre sents an effort to explore the relatively uncharted territory of cognitive and social-cognitive processes embedded in child psychotherapy. The territory is largely uncharted, not because of a lack of interest in children and cognition, but because child psychotherapy has been chronically neglected by clinical researchers. For example, recent meta-analyses of the effectiveness of child psychotherapy draw on less than 30 non behavioral studies of child psychotherapy conducted over a 30-year period. The average of one study per year pales in comparison to the volume of research on adult psychotherapy. Moreover, research exam ining cognitive, affective, and language processes in child psycho therapy is virtually nonexistent. Consequently, the contributions to this volume should not be seen as reviews of an extant, clinical-research literature. Instead, they represent attempts to expand the more familiar and well-researched province of developmental psychology into the rel atively uncharted domain of child psychotherapy process. In addition to bridging the literature on child psychotherapy with research perspectives on children's cognitive and social-cognitive devel opment, this volume attempts to cross a second gap. Recent surveys of the utilization of psychotherapy research by practicing psychotherapists indicate the distance between these two domains is substantial. Only a small minority of practitioners find psychotherapy research to be a useful source of information for their practice.

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