



The Therapy Relationship: A Special Kind of Friendship

Richard Hallam

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This book proposes that the age-old rules and virtues of friendship lie at the heart of all forms of psychotherapy and counselling. A therapist, however, is a special kind of friend. The unwritten moral code of friendship that governs reciprocity, trust, truth-telling, commitment, support, and advice is adopted by all forms of therapy but is modified in unique ways according to underlying theory, philosophy, values, and forms of self-presentation. Codes of conduct and ethical guidelines are viewed in this book as ways to protect the participants from unwanted and distracting obligations and temptations while still benefiting from the intimacy and commitments of friendship. The norms of friendship are adopted as a template in order to evaluate how therapy has deviated from them in order to position itself under the influence of professionalisation, medicalisation, commercialisation, politicisation, and the need to brand itself as an applied technology. It is argued that psychotherapy and counselling will cease to exist if the underlying moral foundation of their practices is ignored and submerged under the pressures of cost-efficiency, government agendas, and the excesses of statutory regulation. In this light, the book critically examines sociological critiques and the wisdom of present ethical codes.

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