

menting the excellent books, *The Courage to Raise Good Men* by Silverstein & Rashbaum and *Real Boys* by Pollack, Kivel takes the task of raising our sons out into the streets. First, Kivel challenges us to “see every boy as one of our sons.” Kivel says we must first learn to have empathy for all boys before we can successfully help any boy have empathy for himself and others. Second, he emphasizes community over the nuclear family. He urges us to teach our sons how to get ahead *and* get together.

Specific chapters provide hands-on suggestions for parents in nearly all aspects of a boy’s life, from family rules to sports to relationships with women to homophobia. Kivel shows us how to become allies with our sons and how to help them become allies with themselves and others. In keeping with the overall theme of reaching out beyond the nuclear family, the final chapters focus on community action. The connection between individual and community is central to Kivel’s message. In his words, “Personal awareness is only useful if it can be connected to social practice.”

The book is graced with beautiful black and white photographs by Kathy Sloane. Kivel makes appropriate use of questions throughout the book- some to ask ourselves, some to ask our sons- to help us consider our own situations and to help us communicate with our sons. Finally, Kivel has compiled an extensive, topically-arranged resource list of books and organizations.

This book would be more complete, however, with a chapter on the non-traditional family in all its evolving forms, including shared custody/two homes, single parenting, absent parents, and blended families. Kivel refers far too briefly to the real and important issue of divorce and its impact on pact.

Our Sons Were Labeled Behaviour Disordered: Here Are the Stories of Our Lives

Joy-Ruth Mickelson
Troy, NY: Educator’s International Press, 2000

Reviewed by Justyna Sempruch

Their sons are diagnosed as hyperactive, severely depressed, and possibly suicidal. In school, administrators segregate them in Behaviour Disordered classrooms, and consult psychologists. Pharmacotherapy is strongly suggested and sophisticated vocabulary is used to make their mothers feel helpless.

In *Our Sons Were Labeled Behavior Disordered*, Ruth Mickelson intertwines her academic discourse with personal stories (letters) written directly to the interviewed mothers. She chooses narrative inquiry as her research method and includes the testimonials of mothers daunted by professional opinion. Moth-

ers, trapped in socially determined constructions, are left to their own devices, but it is not always bad to let mothers speak and decide for their children, argues Mickelson. Who could claim to know their sons better? Who knows what is it like to live in the world of antidepressants, unable to communicate? It is while listening to mothers that Mickelson is able to see the boys as individuals and to define their frustration, despair, and hope. To recognize them, she concludes, is not to summarize, evaluate, or diagnose them but to try and live with them every day. The theme of hope emerges repeatedly throughout the mother's stories.

Little is heard from mothers, Mickelson argues correctly, since they often are stereotyped and humiliated along with their children. Dismissive and inappropriate statements, such as "Find me a BD kid and I'll find you his BD mom," shut too many doors and limit potential treatment. Mickelson repeatedly emphasizes that her letters do not provide clear cut, black-and-white pictures but complex kaleidoscopic realities that should uncover the individual buried under "a load of labels." Her study confirms that behavioural analyses are valuable only as ongoing interpretations.

Self-Esteem – A Family Affair

Jean Illsley Clarke
Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1998

Reviewed by Debbie Dickinson

Self-esteem is a catch all phrase that puts most parents in a quandary. How do we raise responsible and confident children and encourage independence and creativity? How do we best shape our children's emotional well being? These questions are adequately answered in Jean Illsley Clarke's book, *Self-Esteem, A Family Affair*. The title itself places the responsibility for the emotional wellness of children on the entire family. Positive self-esteem can be achieved through advising and supporting children and by acknowledging that both parents and children need reassurance. As a result, the responsibility for children's self-esteem does not fall wholly on one parent. In the past, for example, mothers have been blamed for the problems of low self-esteem, especially in their daughters.

Through examples, exercises, and worksheets, parents are guided in the skillful negotiation of problem solving which clearly set out the expectations for families. With these tools in each chapter, parents have a template that can assist in the process of fostering a positive attitude in our children. Let us not