

Book Review

Barsky, A. E. (2017). *Conflict resolution for the helping professions (3rd ed.)*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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Conflict Resolution for the Helping Professions is a textbook whose original intended audience was social work students. However, conflict resolution has become such a hot topic, and it is clear that the target audience goes far beyond social work. I see Barsky's work applicable to courses found in psychology, political science, business administration, sociology and education. All of my training in conflict resolution was directed and influenced by lawyers. Therefore, I have concluded that practicing lawyers and law students would greatly benefit from reading this book. In addition to degrees in social work, Barsky has a JD, which affords him legitimacy in the legal arena. I wish this book was available in the late 70's and early 80's when I was being trained in conflict resolution and mediation. In addition, I hope the Kettering Foundation—where I received my training—is aware of this fine book.

Barsky offers a well-written (and sometimes folksy) textbook that provides the foundation to apply an array of dispute resolution techniques in a variety of conflicts from a variety of conceptual frameworks. The text uses case studies, class exercises, discussion questions, role-plays, and assignments. Each chapter ends with key points, discussion questions and exercises with short titles. The book facilitates students' abilities to apply the content for practice and classroom learning. Although *Conflict Resolution for the Helping Professions* is primarily intended for students, practitioners may also find the book useful for cases where conflict needs must be addressed prior to other work being accomplished.

The strength of the book is the depth and range of theoretical perspectives. If one examines the other books (textbook or not), Barsky offers us the most comprehensive book and/or textbook addressing conflict resolution. It is quite amazing how much diverse information and theory is packed into this book. Even readers with advanced training in mediation and conflict resolution will find something enlightening within these pages. In searching for a weakness of his work, I find at times, Barsky can be a bit wordy. Occasionally, he will use five words to explain a key point when one word would do. How significant is this? Not much.

If the reader is a professor seeking a textbook for a mediation or conflict resolution course, *Conflict Resolution for the Helping Professions* is the best book currently in the market. In addition, Oxford University Press provides an online instructor's manual. It includes suggestions for course designs and other key issues. Even if one is not teaching a course in this arena, Barsky's book is a valuable asset to any university library that includes majors in any of the social sciences, business and education.