

Book Review

Gambrill, E. & Gibbs, L. (2017). *Critical thinking for helping professionals: A skills-based workbook (4th ed.)*, NY: Oxford University Press.

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Dr. Eileen Gambrill is a Professor at the Graduate School and Emerita Hutto-Patterson Professor of Child and Family Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and has published multiple articles and books during her career. Topics of her publications include evidence-based practice, critical thinking, and ethics.

Dr. Leonard Gibbs was a Professor Emeritus of Social Work at University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire until he passed away in 2008. During his career, he published multiple books and articles on evidenced-based practice.

Critical Thinking for Helping Professionals provides a thorough exploration of skills designed to develop critical thinking for professionals in the helping profession, such as physicians, nurses and social workers. Beginning with an exhaustive overview of topics exploring critical thinking, the authors discuss at length how critical thinking affects the decision-making processes related to belief systems, interventions, problem-solving and advocacy.

The authors encourage the reader to develop a mindset of questioning claims made by authors, corporations, advertising and research. While some claims made in these instances may be valid, the reader is reminded to be cautious about accepting them outright. A healthy level of skepticism will help professionals determine the authenticity of the information being promoted.

The use of critical thinking, paired with a skeptical approach to information being presented, allows professionals to improve their decision-making skills. The authors encourage the reader to critically think about and question the information being provided. Once the professional has thoroughly reviewed the information, decisions are more likely to be based on reliable and valid evidence rather than false or biased information.

The authors encourage the use of these skills when appraising research or reviewing their own practice. Use of critical thinking in the context of research and evaluation of practice will assist the professional in determining the authenticity of the research gathered or the efficacy of their practice. Consistent use of these skills minimizes the potential of using invalid research information and ineffective practice techniques.

Each section incorporates extensive knowledge on the subject. However, the author does not stop there. Multiple exercises are included in each area to help the reader develop and practice skills to improve critical thinking, questioning and decision-making. The exercises offered are thought provoking and will challenge the reader to address biases, improve research evaluation and increase practice efficacy.

Utilization of the exercises contained in the book will reinforce social work values, as well as ethical behavior. Not only will this affect social work professionals, other helping professionals will benefit from challenging their own beliefs and values.

Book review: *Critical thinking for helping professionals: A skills-based workbook (4th ed.)*

While the book is full of information and exercises to benefit the reader, some may be overwhelmed with the challenges to conventional thinking early in the book. In addition, the number of exercises may be too numerous for some to sift through. However, with some patience and perseverance any professional can benefit from the challenges and exercises presented.