



Handbook of Clinical Sociology

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This book is a most welcome addition to the growing literature on sociological practice. There is a wealth of wisdom and experience reflected in these chapters as well as a wide variety of examples of sociology in action. Clinical sociology, in its broadest sense, is the application of a sociological perspective to facilitate change. Its practitioners are primarily change agents rather than scholars or researchers, and work with a client, be that an individual, family, group, organization, or community. The reappearance and growth of clinical sociology during the past decade is the realization of a vision of mine, born in the 1960s and 1970s out of my anger and frustration—first as a graduate student and then as a professor—that sociologists, unlike their psychological brethren, did not practice what they preached. Persons trained in other disciplines were practicing clinical sociology, and those few sociologists who did kept it a secret. The Clinical Sociology Association, which I cofounded in 1978, had its beginnings at a roundtable I led at the American Sociological Association meetings in New York in 1976. I had just concluded four years as the only sociologist on the faculty of the California School of Professional Psychology in Los Angeles teaching graduate clinical psychology students how to do sociology. I saw sociology giving up by default a role in change efforts that necessitate the consideration of social systems. Social workers, psychologists, political scientists, gerontologists, criminologists, marriage and family counselors, to name a few, have eagerly gone where we had failed to tread. Practitioners in these fields, as social systems change agents, have carved a niche, often protecting themselves with licensing laws and other restrictions that make entry by sociologists difficult. Thus we are latecomers in a crowded field.

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Walter Crouse:

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