

## **The Advocate: Book Review Guidelines**

The best book review writers are passionate about the genre under discussion. You might want to read professionally published reviews to get a feel for how they are composed.

### **When reading**

- Begin by reading the back cover, preface, and introduction for an indication of the author's intentions. As you read the rest of the book, consider how successful the author is in achieving this purpose. For example, if the book is meant as an introduction to a topic, it should not be criticized for lacking depth. Review the book based on the author's intentions, not your idea of what a book on the theme should encompass.
- Look at the table of contents to examine how the book is organized and consider commenting on whether the structure is effective.
- Take notes as you read and record content that surprises you, a brief quote you might include, and emotions the book triggers.

### **When Writing**

- Below your headline, provide readers with this basic information:
  - title
  - author(s)
  - illustrator(s)
  - publisher
  - year of publication
  - genre
  - number of pages
  - ISBN
- Write to address the interests and concerns of the magazine's audience—social workers with varying levels of experience and education. How might the content of a book aid a social worker's practice?
- Begin with an engaging first paragraph and strong lead sentence to hook readers
- Ensure the content flows full circle by referencing your first paragraph at the article's end
- Define the book's target audience (caregivers, social workers, students of social work, administrators, children ages 8-12, young adults, etc.)
- Provide a brief summary of the book's contents but do not include any information that would spoil the book for a reader

- include details on the book's appearance, and whether it is illustrated or includes other graphic features
- share the author's qualifications and credentials. Is he/she a social worker, doctor, first-time author, front-line worker, award winning author? For social workers, specify RSW, BSW, MSW.
- remark on the author's style (conversational, clinical, humorous, etc.) and whether it is appropriate for the intended audience
- point out the book's strengths and accomplishments, or where more work is needed
- describe how the book impacted you
- reveal whether you recommend it and why
- aim to make your article so compelling, people will want to share it with others
- allow yourself time to put the work aside for a day and re-examine what you wrote.

### Don't

- Begin with secondary facts, such as qualifications or job titles
- Use underline, bold, or italic options to try to strengthen points. Instead, choose effective wording to create the desired impact.

### Formatting requirements:

- Insert only one space after a period (computer fonts are different than typewriter fonts)
- Submit in Arial, 11 point font, one and a half spaced
- Include credentials after any social workers named, including yourself, Ex. MSW, RSW
- Add an author bio—a single descriptive sentence to follow the article. Example: *Sam Socialworker, BSW, RSW, is a private practitioner specializing in addictions.*
- Name your file: with the book title or a shortened version:  
Book review - title - your last name. Example: Book review – poverty – Jenson.

### Checklist

- The article is no longer than 500 words.
- The submission includes a title, your name, and your credentials.
- You have included a head and shoulder photo of yourself.
- An image of the book cover is provided.
- Your biographic line follows the article.
- You have provided the ACSW with your email address and phone numbers so that the editor of the *Advocate* can contact you if necessary.