



# Meaning Systems and Mental Health Culture: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Counseling and Psychotherapy

*James T. Hansen*

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Meaning Systems and Mental Health Culture: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Counseling and Psychotherapy examines the intersection of meaning systems, mental health culture, and counseling and psychotherapy. By viewing mental health care through the lenses of culture and history, James T. Hansen argues that a defining element of mental health culture, throughout various eras, is the relative value placed on meaning systems. Contemporary mental health care, with its idealization of symptom-based diagnostics, biological reductionism, and the medical model, severely devalues meaning systems. This devaluation has led modern counselors and psychotherapists to largely abandon the factors that should be central to their work. *Meaning Systems and Mental Health Culture* weaves together empirical, historical, cultural, and philosophical perspectives to raise awareness of the need for counseling and psychotherapy to revalue meaning systems, even while operating within a culture that disregards them.



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