

# Book review



## Crack Cocaine: The open door

**Every now and then you come across a book that challenges the way you think.** Christopher Robin and Kenneth Jordan's book, 'Crack Cocaine: The open door' takes preconceptions around crack cocaine and gives them a good laundering.

From their experiences of working with crack cocaine clients, they state that 'in reality crack cocaine is no more addictive than tobacco or alcohol' and consider how drug workers can give their clients the practical armoury they need to change their behaviour.

The techniques are well described and will be easy to pass on to the client: they describe in detail how to help them develop a self-questioning approach to understanding and resisting their cravings, and put them in control of their own behaviour.

I set out expecting to read this textbook a few chapters at a time, then devoured it at one sitting – not because the ideas aren't complex, but because it's immensely readable and it's written in an engaging conversational style.

Take the explanation of the term 'confluence'; this could be boring and convoluted. Instead we are given an image:

'Take a painting palette. Place two dollops of paint, one colour is red and the other is blue. On the palette the red and blue coloured paints are separate. Mix the two colours together. A new colour is created that has its own distinct nature. It has become one. That one is now purple. This is confluence. A great service has confluence, in which the service user, drugs professional, the team and the service environment operate well together.'

The authors achieve a direct style without patronising the reader. Where diagrams are useful they are used, such as in the explanation of The Jo-hari Window. There is also good use of dialogue to draw on examples with the authors' own clients, which works particularly well in demonstrating how well (or badly) workers' interventions might work.

At the start of the book the authors state their intention to dismantle myths surrounding crack cocaine – myths that stand in the way of treating this group the same as any other kind of drug user. The resulting text achieves more, in that it would serve any drug worker well as a stimulus to trying new ways of working and communicating better with their clients, whatever their substance misuse problem. **DDN**

**Crack Cocaine: The Open Door, by Christopher Robin and Kenneth Jordan of Janus Solutions. Published by Janus Publications, 2007. 198 pages. Order at [www.janussolutions.co.uk](http://www.janussolutions.co.uk)**