Interview — Samantha Burridge
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At the reference desk

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SAGE Reference releases another title in its ever-growing collection of single-volume encyclopedias with the publication of the Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide (2012, 978-1412978798, S375). Edited by Charles R. Figley of Pennsylvania State University, this reference consists of more than 280 signed entries that examine numerous types of trauma utilizing a multidisciplinary approach. As such, traumas resulting from both behavioral and neurobiological sources are explored.

It is important to note the serious meaning of trauma as applied in this work. Traumas are seen as major upheavals and catastrophes that cause significant suffering. They are more than chronic stresses in one’s life that can be resolved. They are rather occurrences where “the life enhancing balances and developments are irrevocably distorted.” A look at the encyclopedia’s Reader’s Guide bears this out. Articles run from those on workplace violence and sexual abuse by clergy to those on community disasters and battered women. There are also entries that discuss trauma from anthropological, archaeological, and psychological perspectives with articles like: Racial and Ethnic Factors; Rituals and Ceremonies and Bereavement. In addition, other articles discuss trauma as it relates to a number of other areas including war and combat, crime and law, medicine, religion and spirituality as well as entries related to ethical and philosophical issues. The articles are text-rich with few, but relevant, illustrations. The writing is precise, factual, and informed by recent scholarship. The requisite Readers Guide, bibliographies, “see also” references, and well-structured index are provided and increase the value for both students and faculty. In short, this is another quality SAGE production.

The Encyclopedia of Trauma: An Interdisciplinary Guide reflects the growth of a once narrow specialty that has blossomed into a field with far broader implications. Not only does this work provide relevant background definitions and explanations of diverse issues continued on page 53