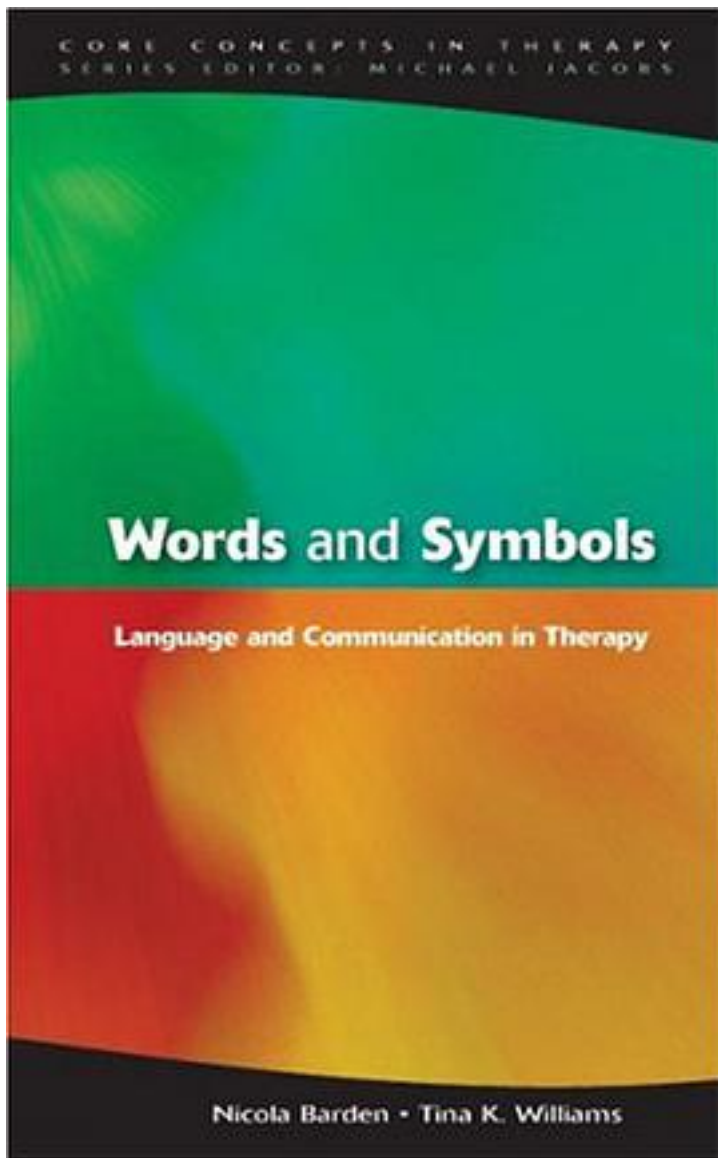


Words and Symbols



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What lies behind the language we use as counsellors and psychotherapists? How does language fit into a therapeutic context? Can we truly say what we mean, and hear what is said, in the consulting room? This book takes apart, lays out and repositions the most basic of therapeutic tools - the language used to communicate between therapist and client. It begins with a summary of the different schools of thought on language acquisition from infancy onwards. It addresses ways in which philosophical and social contexts may impact on the thoughts and words available for speech. Following this it focuses on the detail of the words spoken in a consulting room, and considers dialogue in the arts therapies, where speech may not be the primary tool for understanding. The book also examines what happens when words fail, how symbols are essential for communication, and whether the emphasis on words in the talking therapies has limited the range of communication in the consulting room. An example of this limitation is offered in an extended discussion of gender and language. The book addresses counsellors and psychotherapists from all major theoretical orientations, from psychodynamic therapies through to humanistic and existential approaches, maintaining an overview that is relevant to an integrative position. Written for students of counselling and psychotherapy as well as practitioners who want to develop their skills and awareness, "Words and Symbols" engages the reader in understanding the essence of therapeutic communication.

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