Most therapists have encountered difficult-to-treat clients in their practice: perhaps a resistant marital partner, a referral from a lawyer, an ambivalent adolescent, or someone who experienced previously unsuccessful therapy, to name just a few examples. Stanley Brodsky has written a book, *Therapy With Coerced and Reluctant Clients*, based on his extensive work with treating mandated and coerced clients that could help any therapist be more effective with his or her clients.

Brodsky points out that a traditionally trained therapist is not usually taught how to effectively treat resistant or coerced clients. He proposes that the traditional approach of focusing on exploration of feelings usually leads to ineffective or often-irrelevant discussions with resistant or coerced clients. In this book, Brodsky provides concrete treatment suggestions to augment the work of the traditionally trained therapist.

Brodsky advocates a novel treatment approach that is built on “not asking questions” (p. 45). This approach avoids creating defensiveness in the client and contributes to building a therapeutic relationship. Brodsky provides specific examples of how to utilize this novel approach: The therapist would make affirming statements based on knowledge about the client, articulate observations in the therapy, and/or present the therapeutic possibilities that would push the therapy along and avoid the pitfalls of alienation and mutual frustration.

Once this approach is implemented, other techniques flow from this initial avoidance of probing or interrogating the resistant or coerced client. For later in treatment, Brodsky advocates the use of audio or video recording or even a third party observing the therapy, to promote client self-awareness. Regularly giving direct feedback to the client is encouraged, and, conversely, the client is encouraged to ask questions of the therapist. These techniques used later in the process would seem to help hold interest and more likely maximize the active participation of the client.

The author draws a distinction between mandated/coerced and oppositional clients. Coerced clients enter therapy against their will by events outside their control. However, they are not always from the criminal justice system, Brodsky points out. Parents refer children without the agreement of the youth, employers refer workers with the threat of job loss, and romantic partners threaten breakup of the relationship.

Oppositional and reluctant clients present the therapist with more attitudinal–emotional problems in approaching treatment. The literature review expands on this distinction and provides an excellent and interesting review of the relevant research with reluctant and coerced clients.

Equally interesting is the section devoted to a discussion of the “reluctant and coerced therapist” (p. 31). Brodsky points
