

Fothergill, Rick (2010) Cognitive-behavioral therapy for anxiety disorders. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 38 (3). pp. 367-368.

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Cognitive-behavioral therapy for anxiety disorders, by G. Butler, M. Fennell and A. Hackman, New York, The Guilford Press, 2008, 224 pp., £24.00, ISBN 9781593858308

Reviewed by Rick Fothergill, Principal Lecturer in Psychological Interventions & CBT, University of Cumbria

The effective treatment and management of anxiety disorders often present numerous challenges to therapists. As a cognitive behaviour therapist, I have read and successfully utilised many texts already published within this area to guide my therapeutic interventions. Over recent years the drive to include evidence-based approaches and research findings has perhaps resulted in the manualisation of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for many psychological problems, not least anxiety, with many protocol-driven therapeutic models in existence to assist the therapist to do their best in helping their clients. An argument then rages as to how therapists can use their own creativity if relying heavily on such prescribed approaches to their interventions. However, one does not want to be too critical of these empirically based aids, as one of the main reasons why CBT is so popular today lies in its long-standing scientific endeavours. Nevertheless, a gap in the market does exist for books that focus not just on the 'science' of therapy but also upon its 'art', or as Jacqueline Persons, in her series editor's note that prefaces the text says, 'going beyond the manual' (p. iii).

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety Disorders is primarily aimed at therapists with a previous knowledge of the fundamental principles and practice of CBT, so may not be suitable for beginners or those without some basic skills in CBT. The authors recognise that even the most experienced therapists can get stuck if just relying on protocol-based treatments. The book is written by three very accomplished CBT authors and practitioners, who together bring their wealth of experience. One of them, Melanie Fennell, was voted 'the most influential female UK cognitive therapist in 2002' by the British Association of Behavioral & Cognitive Psychotherapists. Impressive credentials to say the least! The combined clinical experience of the authors allows them to present useful illustrative case studies that really help in bringing the issues they are discussing into the light and clearly does help focus the reader's attention on to the 'art' of CBT.

The book is structured into five parts. This divide appears logical and generally follows the usual phases of therapy with useful pointers for addressing difficulties as therapy proceeds. Part 1, 'Setting the Scene for Anxiety', discusses past and present developments in CBT for anxiety, and provides the rationale for more creativity with

the therapist's toolbox. It gives a brief summary of current evidence-based models for anxiety, but those wanting in-depth discussion of such models will not find adequate detail here. However, useful reference points to other books are highlighted. Part 2, 'Understanding and Engagement', leads an interesting path towards tailor-made collaborative formulations. This is a real strength of the book as it focuses on helping clients find an 'underlying logic' to their problems and thus provides a rationale for the practical solutions offered in therapy. Part 3, 'Facilitating Emotional Processing', focuses on the middle stages of therapy to ensure lasting gains. Of particular use here is the concept of whole person change: that is, helping clients bridge the gap between 'knowing with my head' and 'knowing with my heart'. Such a focus is relevant to contemporary CBT, which has moved away from an over-reliance on mechanistic strategies simply to tackle negative thinking. Part 4, 'Overcoming Obstacles', discusses three common themes that can cause difficulty for even the most skilled therapist: avoidance of affect, low self esteem and dealing with uncertainty. This section is well constructed and illustrates numerous practical solutions to deal with such obstacles and pitfalls. Finally, Part 5, 'Ending Treatment', deals with how to maintain improvements gained during therapy as a blueprint for the future.

The major strength of the book is its focus on individualised, formulation-based approaches. Often, when grappling with protocol-based interventions, one can lose sight of the individual and their identity in trying to make a model fit a client or vice versa. Further difficulty can be experienced when one works with a client who presents with more than one diagnosis. The authors discuss these issues well and promote the use of transdiagnostic strategies that clearly help signpost useful strategies when in such confusing territory.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Anxiety Disorders is a very useful resource for those readers looking for an alternative to manualised treatments for anxiety. It clearly adds to the limited stock of books dedicated to the 'art' of CBT. Critics of CBT may find it illuminating in its highly individualised approach to clients and their problems. However, readers unfamiliar with the basics of CBT may struggle with some of the concepts conveyed. I would certainly recommend this book for inclusion on reading lists for certificate or diploma level CBT courses or for those with an interest in and wishing to explore the wider context of contemporary CBT.

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Spiritual resources in family therapy (2nd edition), edited by F. Walsh, New York, Guilford Press, 2009, 412 pp., £30.50, ISBN 9781606230220

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Whenever I pick up a book with the word 'spiritual' in the title there is always a moment of tension as I slowly examine what this can possibly mean for the author or the contributors. The interpretation of this word can vary from descriptions of sentimental yearnings and New Age ideas to extenuated philosophical understandings