

Schema Therapy. A Practitioner's Guide

By Jeffrey E. Young, Janet S. Klosko, Marjorie E. Weishaar: Guilford Press, New York, NY. 2003, 470pp., \$42.00. (hardcover)

Schematherapy has got much attention in recent years. Especially cognitive behavior therapists have been interested in this approach, as they missed concepts for personality and character disorders, which traditionally have been the focus of psychodynamic therapies.

With this book, Jeff Young and coworkers intend to summarize the concept and describe practical ways of doing schema therapy. The subtitle reads "A practitioner's guide". The reader will find an introductory overview, chapters on core concepts like schema assessment and education, cognitive strategies, experiential strategies, behavioural pattern-breaking, and the therapy relationship. This is followed by a description of specific treatment strategies for 18 different schemas and for borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. Therapists and especially cognitive behaviour therapists will find in this book everything they need to work with this very difficult group of patients, suffering from personality disorders.

Apart from the use as treatment manual, the book is also of interest for readers with an interest in the theory and research of psychiatry, clinical psychology, and psychotherapy. Stimulating thoughts and interesting questions refer to the definition, understanding and development of personality disorders or the definition of psychotherapy and especially schools of psychotherapy.

The authors discuss whether schema therapy is a form of cognitive psychotherapy or a separate treatment approach. Jeff Young is a long time coworker of A. T. Beck and has great part in the development of cognitive therapy. In so far it is not surprising that the language of this book on schema therapy uses the same terminology as earlier ones on cognitive therapy. The authors state themselves that there are "many points of similarity" with A. T. Beck's model of cognitive therapy and some "subtle differences". Schema therapy works with cognitive assessment, cognitive techniques, internal dialogues, behaviour change methods, or home work assignments and can therefore be seen as an extension of cognitive therapy on the area of personality disorders. Therefore, in order to correctly apply schema therapy, a general training in cognitive therapy seems to be appropriate. What are the new aspects? Firstly, there is an extended understanding of cognitive schemata. They have always been a core concept in cognitive psychotherapy. Jeff Young sets them in relation to early childhood experiences, similar to psychodynamic concepts. Additionally he points to new developments in neurobiology and mood research which show that the brain structure is developing depending on experiences in early life, that this forms the emotionality of a person and this then decides about what a person thinks and how he or she perceives the world over the life span. The question is whether schema therapy can help to give empirical evidence to these assumptions. Another interesting question is whether there are 18 maladaptive schemata, and whether they are valid not only for the American but also other cultures. The maladaptive schema, as described by Jeff Young give a helpful guideline and the author himself discusses that there also could be other schemata. So the question is, whether schema therapy should not better be defined on how to explore the special schema of an individual patient instead of trying to answer which of the 18 schema might best apply to this patient. Another question is, what the delineation of 18 schema means for the classification of personality disorders in DSM or ICD. Should there be 18 disorders?

In summary, the book from Jeff Young and colleagues is a thought giving book and is recommended for the clinician as well as the researcher.

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