

Depressed & Anxious: The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Workbook for Overcoming Depression & Anxiety.

Thomas Marra. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger (www.newharbinger.com). 2004, 254 pp, \$19.95 (softcover).

The recent publication of this book reflects the growing interest in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), which is a psychosocial treatment originally developed by Dr. Marsha Linehan specifically to treat Borderline Personality Disorder. The author takes the direction of applying the framework and tools of DBT to a broader audience of those with anxiety and mood problems, not necessarily related to an underlying personality disorder. This is a welcome and useful direction. This book, the first to bring DBT to general readers, is a welcome addition that exposes DBT to those who might not otherwise have learned about the important concepts underlying DBT.

Another useful direction of the book concerns its central focus on 'mixed anxiety and depression'. By focusing on the interface between anxiety and mood problems, the author recognizes and seeks to address clinically the very high rates of comorbidity between these two problem categories. While useful, the author also at times implies a distinct diagnostic entity which is not currently represented in the diagnostic nomenclature. Thus it is questionable to use this label in what appears to be akin to a diagnosis, implying the naming of a new disorder, distinct from other known disorders. .

“Depressed & Anxious: The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Workbook for Overcoming Depression & Anxiety” is divided into nine chapters that cover topics such as Mindfulness Skills, Meaning Making, Emotion Regulation and Distress Tolerance Skills. The first three chapters lay the foundation for the subsequent chapters. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the new topic and follows with examples and interactive worksheets for the reader to follow along with personal experiences. Throughout each chapter the author highlights the importance of completing the numerous exercises that serve to explain the points discussed. The exercises are numerous, evocative, and engaging. They allow the reader to work practically and productively with the concepts underlying the DBT approach.

The subsequent chapters slowly build upon each other forming the basis for subsequent topics. The author does a brilliant job at using current examples and writing in a style that allows the readers to understand the jargon and sometimes difficult concepts associated with DBT. For example, the use of mnemonic devices serves as a good method for readers to recall important points, thus enhancing their DBT practice. The additional clinical tools available include a variety of worksheets to promote readers to use their own examples from their lives. This is widely used throughout the workbook as a method for explanation and is done particularly well. The book provides practical techniques for implementing the many modules of DBT, with practical exercises integrated throughout, such as emotion modulation skills, mindfulness skills and distress tolerance skills specific for use in depression and anxiety. The book ends with inclusion of the worksheets for photocopying so that the reader can use them repeatedly, a further example of the practical, interactive nature of this workbook.

Two concepts which the author skillfully introduces to readers are particularly welcome additions to the self-help literature since they are not currently major components of similar models such as CBT. First, the author's presentation of dialectics is important and unique. The book lays out, and identifies as normal, numerous instances of the tension between thoughts, feelings and behaviour patterns that seem to pull in opposite directions (e.g., the coexistence of

desires for independence and dependence, the push for self-enhancement versus self-acceptance, desires for emotion regulation and emotion tolerance). The reader is then helped to identify these competing desires. This discussion is particularly useful in educating readers about these common dialectics, normalizing their frequent occurrence, and helping readers to make choices based on preferences and values.

In addition, the chapters on emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and mindfulness provide an insightful and new way for readers to understand and manage distressing emotional responses. The author helps readers to differentiate between primary and secondary emotion - between the informational value of emotions and one's reaction to primary emotions. This is in line with important and similar work by Greenberg and colleagues on Emotion Focused Therapy suggesting a view of emotions as adaptive and informative, and emphasizing the ability to differentiate between types of emotional responding. The metaphor of viewing emotions as primary sensory input, akin to all senses (e.g., sight, hearing), was particularly compelling, and supports the author's argument that not attending to these sources of information is problematic in perpetuating maladaptive emotional experiences. By taking this approach, the reader is offered hope for the management of distressing, uncontrollable feelings.

This book is a welcome addition to the list of workbooks for clients dealing with mood and anxiety disorders and introduces DBT to mainstream reading, expanding its applicability from borderline personality disorder to other more prevalent disorders. While we applaud this generalization, it should be noted that this transfer is not yet supported by a body of data on the efficacy of DBT in disorders outside of borderline personality disorder. Thus, the author's claims that DBT is 'especially powerful' for mixed anxiety and depression are premature, and imply a uniqueness or special status of DBT in these cases which is not warranted by the data. However, the concepts underlying the DBT model and many of its core techniques are consistent with other empirically supported models of intervention in anxiety and depression. Beyond this, the author introduces other welcome concepts such as recognizing and working with dialectics and practical emotion regulation strategies, that have garnered support in controlled trials of other therapies.

This book is highly recommended for those seeking to understand DBT and its framework. The book will be useful for client's themselves to work through, for clinicians in gaining practical familiarity with DBT, and as a treatment adjunct for clinicians working with clients with mood and anxiety problems.

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