

Learning Cognitive-Behavior Therapy: An Illustrated Guide.

Jesse H. Wright, Monica Ramirez Basco, and Michael E. Thase. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. (www.appi.org). 2006, 300 pp., \$49.00 (softcover with DVD).

As cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) training programs expand in psychiatric residency, psychology training and other mental health professional programs, there is a growing need for practical textbooks to accompany the curriculums. Wright, Basco and Thase, leading authorities in the field, have written an invaluable guide to those learning the essentials skills of CBT and provide CBT educators with a number of exercises and tools that can be executed in class, workshops and/or individual and supervision.

A DVD of core CBT methods accompanies the guide, which contains ten chapters covering core competencies and topics in CBT. A major strength of this user-friendly book is that it is replete with therapist-patient dialogues, learning exercises with role-plays, and video demonstrations of specific techniques and strategies. The authors provide numerous case examples that are full of rich dialogue between therapist and patient. For example, in the second chapter on the therapeutic relationship, the authors discuss the case of a depressed patient who is beginning therapy and is having difficulty completing a homework assignment that involves filling out a thought change record. The dialogue demonstrates the therapist skillfully working with the patient to help him to identify his automatic thoughts related to a stressful situation.

Those involved in training residents, interns and other professional staff know how useful role playing exercises are for developing and practicing CBT skills. Throughout the book, the authors suggest specific “learning exercises” that involve the role-play method aimed at practicing and honing skills. The authors provide a very helpful framework and methodology for carrying out the role-plays. For example, the authors suggest having the trainee ask another trainee, colleague or supervisor to role-play around a particular skill. The trainee takes turns as the therapist and patient. These exercises are immensely useful since they provide the trainee with a strategy for practicing a skill and educators with guidelines for setting up the training experience.

Along with patient-therapist dialogue and suggested learning exercises, nineteen scripted video vignettes demonstrate skills discussed in the book. The DVD is a critical component of the guide since trainees greatly benefit from observing “experts.” The video that accompanies the book provides this experience around key aspects of CBT such as “agenda setting” and “examining the evidence.” Chapter 2, for example, focuses on the core feature of the therapeutic relationship, “collaborative empiricism.” In the video component, Dr. Wright demonstrates a relationship building strategy by asking his patient with panic disorder what she would like to work on first. Through use of Socratic questioning, Dr. Wright artfully exposes the catastrophic nature of her thinking and gets her on board in collaborating on a homework assignment. While beginning students of CBT are fairly quick at learning the structuring elements of the session, techniques such as critical examination of evidence and guided discovery can be much more difficult to grasp. Beginning CBT therapists often fall victim to the need to “fix” things and may find that they lecture to or debate with their patients. The video provides numerous examples of the socratic questioning method that will be elucidating to beginning therapists.

Wright, Basco and Thase have done an outstanding job in researching each chapter, which are richly referenced. The authors provide appendices including the cognitive therapy rating scale that all CBT trainers should use to evaluate the progress of their students as well as several practical worksheets (e.g., cognitive-behavior therapy case formulation worksheet). The

authors also provide a number of cognitive behavior resources including bibliotherapy for patients, and a listing of cognitive behavior therapy centers around the world.

Cognitive behavioral therapy has become integral to training programs in psychology and psychiatry around the world. *Learning Cognitive Behavior Therapy: An Illustrated Guide* with its practical exercises and video demonstrations should be required reading for all students learning CBT. Drs, Wright, Basco and Thase have provided therapists (novice and experienced) and CBT educators with an invaluable contribution.

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