

Oxford Guide to Behavioural Experiments in Cognitive Therapy.

James Bennett-Levy, Gillian Butler, Melanie Fennell, Ann Hackmann, Martina Mueller, & David Westbrook (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press (www.octc.co.uk). 2004, 461 pp., \$48.77 (paperback).

The Oxford Guide to Behavioural Experiments in Cognitive Therapy is an important addition to every cognitive-behavioral clinician's library. As the editors state in their preface to the book, "Despite the fact that behavioural experiments are amongst the most central, and the most powerful, interventions in cognitive therapy, there is a dearth of relevant literature which provides a practical, how-to-do-it focus for their design and implementation" (p. xiii). This book fills that gap admirably. The authors in the volume systematically guide the reader from diagnosis to cognitive conceptualization to behavioral experiments through outcome. It is a text that is appropriate for a wide audience ranging from graduate students who will benefit from the concise and educational summaries in each chapter to seasoned clinicians in search of novel and creative behavioral experiment suggestions. Clinical supervisors will utilize the text as a means of succinctly describing diagnoses and treatment plan.

The book is well structured and organized. The initial chapters review the history, theory, and rationale of behavioral experiments. The authors then outline a framework for developing behavioral experiments which is based on Lewin and Kolb's experiential learning circle. Their framework includes four components: plan, experience, observe, and reflect. Subsequent chapters are each devoted to a particular diagnosis including panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and eating disorders. A particular highlight of the book are chapters dedicated to problems which occur across diagnoses such as avoidance of affect, interpersonal difficulties, and low self-esteem.

The book follows a format which is replicated in each chapter. Maintaining the same pattern throughout the book makes it quite easy for the reader to quickly immerse him or herself in the relevant chapter and extract the needed information. This text is extremely user-friendly and efficiently arranged. The chapters are organized in the following sequence: a concise description of the disorder, a cognitive model of the disorder, the key cognitions of the disorder, behavioral experiments to test out each of the previously described cognitions, particular difficulties the clinician may encounter, other relevant chapters in the book, and recommendations for additional reading. Finally, each chapter concludes with "Tales from the front line" which are humorous anecdotes based on actual behavioral experiments. These tales humanize the examples and provide a fun break from the more serious text.

The actual behavioral experiments described in each chapter are insightful, creative, and directly linked to modifying or eradicating problematic cognitions. Each behavioral experiment has a unique rationale which is readily clear to the reader. The behavioral experiments are outlined and then described in the context of case presentations. This format makes them easy to grasp and then utilize. Because the experiments are explained so clearly and thoroughly in the text, clinicians can easily provide clients with a rationale for the particular experiment. This understanding, for both the clinician and the client, may facilitate a stronger alliance, subsequent compliance, and greater likelihood of implementing the behavioral experiment successfully. The authors provide tremendous detail and many useful charts and suggestions, as well as basic tips and possible problems. These factors contribute to a text that is highly practical and likely to be employed by a wide variety of clinicians. This book will serve as a quick go-to guide when

clinicians are stymied and need a powerful, yet easy to implement strategy for testing out a range of beliefs. It is likely to become a well-worn source book on many clinicians' book shelves.

Vicki Gluhoski, Ph.D.
Private Practice
New York, New York 10021

Abstract

The Oxford Guide to Behavioural Experiments in Cognitive Therapy is a welcome addition to the cognitive therapy literature. It provides a straightforward, practical guide to designing and implementing behavioral experiments based on sound diagnostic understanding and cognitive conceptualization. This manual is appropriate for a wide audience, ranging from novice graduate students to seasoned clinicians.