

Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents (2nd edition).

Tracy L Morris and John S. March (Eds.). New York: Guilford Press (www.guilford.com). 2004, 395 pp., \$46.00 (hardcover).

Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents are relatively common and can have a profound effect on child development over a period of many years. A thorough understanding of anxiety is crucial for professionals who are providing mental health services for children. This revised and updated edition of "Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents" is a welcome addition to the literature and will provide an essential reference book for anyone engaged in working with or researching anxiety disorders in young people.

Over the last 10 years there have been considerable advances in the understanding of the neurobiology, genetics and treatment of anxiety disorders, and the chapters in this book have been fully revised to take account of these developments. Moreover, there is an additional chapter on prevention of anxiety, which acknowledges the importance of intervening early, using the accumulating understanding we have of these disorders. The book is written by leading experts in the field, who ensure that all the different aspects of anxiety are covered in a comprehensive way. Although the book is written by multiple authors, the style and content hang together very well and provide an excellent coverage of the subject. .

The book is divided into three sections: the first reviews the evidence clarifying the nature and causes of anxiety in children and covers issues relating to assessment, the second deals in detail with the different anxiety disorders, and the final section covers treatment and prevention. This section gives an overview of treatment, with the more specific aspects of treatment covered briefly in the individual chapters on the different anxiety disorders.

The first section dealing with the foundations of anxiety, covers the neurocognitive influences, behavioural inhibition, social development and behavioural genetics. The chapter on neurobiology is a fascinating first chapter which describes the neural circuitry involved in the experience and expression of emotion and the neural processes involved in fear conditioning. It also discusses the memory and attention biases which consolidate the experience of anxiety. This chapter clarifies the "mind/brain" link in anxiety, and is written clearly with useful summaries. The chapter on behavioural inhibition discusses the heritability and stability of this condition, with implications for at-risk children. The chapter on social development covers the influence of parents and peers and highlights the way that risk factors tend to compound over time. The implications for early intervention are clearly spelled out. The chapter on behavioural genetics surveys the research regarding genetic aspects of anxiety, and also highlights the potential for prevention and treatment of anxiety.

The first section of the book also includes a practical chapter on assessment. This gives an overview of the factors required in a comprehensive assessment of anxiety and discusses the merits of the different rating scales. The authors also stress the need to look beyond pathology, and assess resilience and positive adjustment too - although they do not elaborate on ways of doing this.

The second section takes us through the different disorders in detail, including generalised anxiety disorder, social phobia, separation anxiety, panic disorder, obsessional compulsive disorder, PTSD, specific phobia and selective mutism. This is a good coverage, although I would have liked to see a chapter on health anxiety too. Each section deals with epidemiology, phenomenology, diagnosis, course, assessment, and treatment. The chapters all highlight the research evidence for treatment. Clinicians working with these different disorders

would find the summaries of treatment strategies very helpful; the chapter on PTSD has a particularly useful section on treatment.

The final section gives an overview of treatment approaches in anxiety disorders. The chapter on CBT is helpful, breaking the treatment down into separate components and describing the specific strategies, such as exposure-based treatment, contingency management, modelling and cognitive strategies. The section on cognitive strategies could have been expanded, given the increasing interest in cognitive aspects to CBT with young people. The case example brings the theory to life and does cover the use of cognitive strategies, as well as behavioural aspects. The issue of family involvement is mentioned. However, there could have been a wider review of research in this area and more discussion on the different ways in which families can be involved, including working with parents with young children who are anxious.

Deciding on when and how to use medication in children/adolescents with anxiety can be a difficult task for clinicians. The chapter on pharmacotherapy gives a useful summary of the evidence base and usage of the various types of medication. A further chapter on combining medication and psychosocial treatments presents helpful guidelines on how the clinician might use these approaches together.

The final chapter on prevention is an important addition to this revised edition. The authors describe universal, selective and indicative prevention strategies and discuss the role of risk factors. They highlight the need to modify institutions and environments as well as individuals - a crucial area for future development of research and thinking.

Overall, this is a very readable and scholarly book, which would be of great interest to clinicians and researchers as well as students of child development, psychiatry, psychology and other disciplines involved with the understanding and treatment of mental health disorders in children and adolescents.

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