

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Eating Disorders:
A Comprehensive Treatment Guide.**

Glenn Waller, Helen Cordery, Emma Corstorphine, Hendrik Hinrichsen, Rachel Lawson, Victoria Mountford. Cambridge University Press (www.cambridge.org), 2007, 466 pp., \$65.00 (USD) / £35.00 (GBP), Paperback.

I was really pleased to be asked to review this book for two reasons: firstly because of the authors' expertise in this area and secondly, because I had just returned from maternity leave and needed to refresh my own skills. In my opinion this book provides an excellent, comprehensive guide to undertaking CBT for eating disorders, covering the main knowledge and skill areas when working with this group. The book is structured into 7 main sections: 1) Introduction (incorporating the philosophical and theoretical stance to CBT, broad stages of CBT, medical issues, risk assessment, multidisciplinary working and therapy expectations); 2) Core clinical skills for use in CBT with the eating disorders (with specific chapters on assessment, preparing the patient for treatment, motivation, dietary and nutritional issues, weighing, case formulation, therapy interfering behaviours, homework, surviving as an effective clinician, setting and maintaining an agenda, psychoeducation and diaries); 3) Core CBT skills as relevant to the eating disorders (Socratic questioning, downward arrowing, cognitive restructuring, continuum thinking, positive data logs and behavioural experiments); 4) Addressing eating, shape and weight concerns in the eating disorders; 5) When the standard approach to CBT is not enough, (with separate chapters on comorbidity with Axis 1 and Axis 2 disorders); 6) CBT for children and adolescents with eating disorders and their families and 7) Endings, which includes chapters on what to do when CBT is ineffective, a detailed chapter on recovery and a chapter on relapse management.

The book sets out to be a guide of general principles and skills rather than a formal protocol, allowing the clinician to individualize and adapt CBT. This seems particularly appropriate: while CBT is the treatment of choice and consensus for patients with eating disorders, it still lacks evidence with key sub-groups (namely people with anorexia nervosa). Waller and colleagues draw upon other models often used clinically with this group but rarely brought together within a text (e.g. stages of change theory, motivational enhancement therapy, solution-focussed techniques), providing a helpful 'one-stop-shop' and illustrating how traditional CBT can easily and usefully be augmented to better meet patient needs. The authors also add to previous literature by incorporating their considerable clinical experience working with complex cases and patients who are hard to engage. A strength of this book is the sharing of tips, practical handouts and 'watch-outs' for less experienced therapists. In addition to breadth, this book highlights the importance of two key CBT tools and in particular the *process* of using them in therapy: formulation (critical in terms of engagement) and behavioural experiments (crucial to enable meaningful belief change).

As well as its therapeutic skills focus, this book provides a useful overview of knowledge necessary to work with this patient group (e.g. medical risks, nutrition), indicating it will be an invaluable resource for professionals or trainees new (and old) to the area. Having said this, there are moments I'm left wondering whether this book attempts to be *too* comprehensive to *too* wide a readership – aiming both to provide foundation skills and knowledge while also incorporating how to work with very complex cases, both adults and children etc. At times I found the structure a little complex within the overall subsections. For example, I found the section on surviving as an effective clinician very useful but rather

disjointed placed in the middle of the core clinical skills section (section 2). In addition I would have liked some more examples or time spent on the chapters in section 3 on core CBT skills. These points made me feel that the book may be a little too complicated in places for someone without previous experience of CBT.

This guide is based on the most up to date evidence for working with eating disorders but I feel its greatest contribution is the set of clinical insights that research publications often omit. For this I am grateful as a practising clinician. I will certainly continue to consult the book and use the appendices when working with patients, and I thoroughly recommend it to other professionals of all backgrounds.

Rachel Woolrich, D. Clin. Psych.
Oxford & Bucks Eating Disorder Service
Tindal Centre, Aylesbury, UK.