

Using Homework Assignments in Cognitive Behavior Therapy.

Kazantzis, N., Deane, F. P., Ronan, K. R. & L'Abate, L (Eds.). New York: Routledge (www.routledge-ny.com), 2005, 436 pp., \$45.00 (hardcover).

Homework has been an important component of cognitive-behavior therapy from its conception and the ability of cognitive-behavior therapists to increase a client's compliance with therapy homework might be one of the crucial therapeutic skills that determines the success of cognitive-behavior therapy in real-world clinical settings. To that end, Using Homework Assignments in Cognitive Behavior Therapy is an essential resource for cognitive-behavior therapists looking to improve their effectiveness in using homework assignments in routine clinical practice.

The book consists of eighteen chapters divided into four parts. Part I presents a thorough overview of the theoretical and empirical foundations that support the use of homework in cognitive-behavior therapy, as well as an excellent chapter on assessing homework compliance. These chapters, in particular, will benefit those who teach cognitive-behavior therapy in academic and clinical settings, as they are essentially a primer on the behavioral and cognitive principles that underpin cognitive and behavioral interventions.

Part II examines the use of homework assignments with specific populations, and includes chapters on cognitive-behavior therapy with children, adolescents, older adults, couples, and families. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on using homework with children and adolescents, as I am always looking for ideas to engage youth in trying and practicing specific skills. In particular, I appreciated the examples of using homework with youth who are not highly motivated to comply. Clearly, the authors have a light and respectful touch with their clients, and this stance and their breadth of experience show in their ability to engage the youth in the tasks of cognitive-behavior therapy. The chapters on using homework assignments with couples and families were interesting too, in part because homework with these populations can sometimes unbalance the family or couple system in unpredictable and problematic ways. The authors of these chapters clearly understand how to work with these populations to achieve the greatest benefit from any homework assignment.

Part III covers the use of homework assignments in cognitive-behavior therapy for specific problems, and include chapters on panic, agoraphobia, and generalized anxiety, obsessions and compulsions, depression, substance abuse, delusions and hallucinations, sexual problems, and borderline traits. Every chapter demonstrated the authors' thoughtful and creative application of homework assignments to get the job done. I found the chapter on using homework assignments in cognitive-behavior therapy for delusions and hallucinations quite interesting. The authors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness of these clients, and the strategies for assigning homework when insight is poor or motivation is low were particularly helpful.

The book concludes (Part IV) with a chapter that presents a model for using homework assignments in cognitive-behavior therapy. The authors propose guidelines for improving homework compliance that are largely within the therapist's control (e.g., make homework assignments specific and clear; reinforce homework compliance; try to anticipate and reduce negative effects of homework compliance). In addition, the authors recognize that many client factors can contribute to homework noncompliance in cognitive-behavior therapy. In fact, the authors argue that homework noncompliance, to some degree, is an inevitable feature of cognitive-behavior therapy and when effectively addressed can yield some of the greatest

opportunities for therapeutic change. To that end, the authors present a conceptual framework for understanding homework noncompliance and intervening effectively.

All chapters are concise and practical. Many chapters include clear and useful diagrams. Other chapters include transcripts that illustrate how these experienced cognitive-behavior therapists use homework with specific populations or for specific problems. The index is well organized, and the references for each chapter are comprehensive and useful.

In conclusion, the editors of this book have assembled some of the foremost authorities in the field of cognitive-behavior therapy who write thoughtfully on an intriguing array of topics. I highly recommend this book for cognitive-behavior therapists who are looking for a thoughtful reference work on this important subject.

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