

**An Introduction to Modern CBT  
Psychological Solutions to Mental Health Problems**

Stefan G. Hofmann

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I have been waiting a long time for a single volume to summarize the entire enterprise of CBT. To me, no previous volume has been sufficiently comprehensive or empirically focused to earn my recommendation as a complete introduction. Thankfully, in this book, Hofmann checks all the boxes. He depicts CBT at its very best, as a progressive domain of science, open to any empirical claim, with scientific data serving as the ultimate arbiter. Hofmann's non-defensive and even-handed approach lends the book unprecedented breadth and depth, unbiased by allegiance to any proprietary model. His thoroughgoing commitment to science as the only legitimate guide to the growth of CBT makes this book the most powerful of its kind. For many years I have wished that I could refer students, early-career clinicians, and even bright and motivated patients to a single book that would explain how CBT works as a science. This is the single book I have been waiting for.

In the Preface, Hofmann candidly portrays the obstacles faced by the cottage industry of scientific CBT competing with the multi-billion dollar financial interests of the pharmaceutical industry. His straightforward way of explaining the biases in marketing of pharmaceuticals is quite compelling. He articulates hopes that scientific CBT can be disseminated despite the resources available to pharmaceutical companies. The power of the simple honesty in Hofmann's observations should not be underestimated in this regard. He says he wants to help disseminate CBT. If patients read nothing but the preface of this book, I believe Hofmann will have accomplished that goal.

The first chapter, "The Basic Idea," gives Beck and Ellis equal credit for developing psychotherapies that rely on empirical methods, and that focus on patients' current cognition as a pivotal mechanism for change in emotions and behavior. Hofmann correctly asserts that modern CBT has come to embrace the study of emotion more centrally within the last 20 years. He explains, through examples of empirical discoveries, how CBT is now highly informed by cognitive and affective neuroscience. It is clear from this chapter that Hofmann not only sees CBT as a growing, learning, empirical enterprise, but that he sees patients benefitting from taking a similar approach in their own lives. He explains that in CBT, "The patient is an active collaborator who is considered to be an expert on his or her psychological problems."

In the second chapter, "Empowering the Mind," a good deal of attention is paid to processes that set the stage for psychological change. Prochaska's transtheoretical cycle of change is presented and elaborated, and motivational enhancement is well reviewed. General CBT assessment and treatment methods are also presented, including identification of maladaptive cognition, testing the validity of thoughts, situational and attentional modification, and cognitive restructuring, all with a keen sensitivity to the power of collaborative empiricism and Socratic technique. Meditation and Acceptance are presented as entirely compatible with CBT, and good emphasis is given to behavior modification and exposure techniques. In addition to providing references to some standard assessment measures for tracking patient progress, Hofmann also astutely recommends constructing customized monitoring forms for each patient.

In each of the subsequent chapters, "Confronting Phobias," "Fighting Panic and Agoraphobia," "Conquering Social Anxiety Disorder," "Treating Obsessive Compulsive

Disorder,” “Beating Generalized Anxiety disorder and Worry,” “Dealing with Depression,” “Overcoming Alcohol Problems,” “Resolving Sexual Problems,” “Managing Pain,” and “Mastering Sleep,” Hofmann provides a definition of the disorder, a treatment model for it, specific treatment strategies, a review of empirical support, and recommended further readings. The treatment models, strategies, and empirical support provided for each problem are very up to date and state-of-the-art. Each of these chapters could stand on its own as a very concise set of “best practices” guidelines.

It is clear that Hofmann considers the treatments for each of these problems as works in progress, each benefitting from refinements gained through empirical research. His belief in this iterative process is abundantly evident from the sheer amount of this research he has done himself. After reading this book, I cannot imagine a better introduction to the current field of CBT, precisely because it serves as both an example of, and a manifesto for, empirically guided treatment. It is the only book that I intend to recommend to everyone.

**Bradford C. Richards, Ph.D., ABPP**  
Supervising Psychologist  
Cognitive Behavioral Institute of Albuquerque  
Albuquerque, NM