

Reviews

Overcoming Postnatal Depression: A Five Areas Approach

Chris Williams, Roch Cantwell & Karen Robertson
Hodder Arnold, 2009, £22.99 pb, 380 pp.
ISBN: 9780340972342

Initially, this book confused me. Looking at the cover, the book's size and weight, I assumed it was a text for health professionals and was therefore very surprised to open it and find out that it is a self-help text intended for women with postnatal depression. However, it might also be helpful for close friends, family members or professionals. The five areas from the title are: altered thinking, altered feelings, altered physical symptoms, altered behaviour and life situation, people and events around us.

The book is one of a series that includes workbooks on depression and low mood, teenage depression and low mood, and anxiety, stress and panic. Each is soundly based on cognitive-behavioural therapy.

Part 1, on understanding how you are feeling, looks at how you will use the workbooks and encourages the reader to rate themselves in the five areas. Part 2 focuses on making changes and the workbooks here look at people and events, behaviours and activities, negative and upsetting thinking, changes to things that affect your bodily function and planning for the future. It is well laid out, with bullet points, plenty of space to make notes, with checklists and questions, highlighted key points and cartoon illustrations. There are frequent references to two websites, www.livinglifetothefull.com and www.fiveareas.com. Much of the first site, written by the first author, is free but both professionals and the public have to register to use it. Some of its resources are in formats for people who are blind or visually impaired. The other website has more resources, including short key skills booklets.

Professionals are given permission to copy pages for use in therapy and this book is indeed a valuable resource for those working with women who experience postnatal depression. However, patients might find the book in its current format too daunting and the workbooks would benefit from being in a more colourful, bite-sized format. The price is also a big chunk of the budget for women on very low incomes and the book and the websites are only available in English.

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Developmental Disabilities from Childhood to Adulthood: What Works for Psychiatrists in Community and Institutional Settings

Roxanne C. Dryden-Edwards & Lee Combrinck-Graham (eds)
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010, US\$65.00 hb, 376 pp.
ISBN: 9780801894183

Postgraduate textbooks focusing on the mental health needs of people with intellectual disabilities are few in number. This multi-author book, written by practitioners the majority of whom are psychiatrists, is aimed at psychiatrists who see people with intellectual disabilities in their day-to-day practice. As the title suggests, the focus is on what works in clinical practice and the authors use a number of case vignettes to illustrate the evidence reviewed in each chapter. The book has taken a lifespan approach. The terminology used is either 'developmental disabilities' or 'mental retardation', whereas in the UK we tend to use the terms 'learning disabilities' or 'intellectual disabilities' to refer to the same group of people.

The book is divided into four sections, with part one providing an overview and life-cycle approach. There is a chapter on autism-spectrum disorders, which may reflect the growing significance of these disorders in the provision of services for people with intellectual disabilities. Part two covers aetiology and assessment, including an excellent chapter on acquired brain injury. Part three covers community living for people with intellectual disabilities and part four looks at interventions; it includes a chapter on pharmacology, an easy-to-read, succinct review of the evidence. The final part of the book provides a useful overview of ethics, legal issues and advocacy.

This book may have more appeal to psychiatrists in the USA as an informative resource on the needs of people with intellectual disabilities presenting to mental health services. For the psychiatrist working in the UK, it provides a wonderful insight into how colleagues in other countries deal with similar issues in this group of patients. For example, impulse-control disorders are commonly reported in clinics for people with intellectual disabilities in the USA but rarely reported in UK services. My guess is that we are probably seeing the same patients, so it would be helpful to compare and contrast our clinical practice in a more systematic way.

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