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Green, H. (2008). Cognitive behavioural therapy explained. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 27, 459-460

This introductory overview of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) by British National Health Service Consultant Psychiatrists Graeme Whitfield and Alan Davidson is intended for novices to CBT. Both authors are accredited in CBT through the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies. The primary intended audience is psychiatrists-in-training and others who have training or background in a therapeutic discipline but are unfamiliar with CBT. General practitioners, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists and social workers (or those training in these or related disciplines) are among those who may be interested in this book.

Information on the development of the book shows its emphasis on training. The authors note that the book was “written to complement” Patricia Hughes and Daniel Riordan’s *Dynamic Psychotherapy Explained* (2nd edition, 2006) with intentional use of a similar writing style and approach in both books. Furthermore, a major contribution to the book comes from teaching notes that the authors have developed over a number of years and used with psychiatrists in training. The text is not intended to be sufficient as a stand-alone resource for becoming a CBT therapist, but rather provides an introduction and overview to improve familiarity with concepts and stimulate further development in CBT or specific components if required by the reader. To this end, each chapter ends with selected further reading, with a complete reference list given at the end of the book. The authors note that, in attempting to remain concise and not overwhelm the reader with information, the emphasis with suggested further reading is on key references rather than necessarily the most recent references.

Part 1 provides background to CBT, including definitions, theoretical development, formulation and the evidence base. The evidence base is up-to-date and includes levels of evidence according to the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines. Part 2 introduces concepts in the practice of CBT including considerations regarding trainee readiness and an accurate overview of a number of CBT techniques. Encouragement of the therapist’s own use of CBT practice is a sound demonstration of CBT principles. This section’s inclusion of common factors and therapeutic relationship issues is a helpful counterpoint to the common misconception that CBT involves stand-alone techniques that can be effectively learned and applied in “cookbook” fashion. Also helpful is frequent inclusion of more than one example of a specific technique, which helps to demonstrate principles rather than a prescriptive method for applying a particular technique.

Part 3 provides a concise overview of applications of CBT with a number of disorders. These incorporate “classic” CBT techniques such as graded exposure as well as newer techniques such as

mindfulness, dialectical behaviour therapy and schema-focused therapy. Descriptions fit with current evidence and practice and would guide further exploration since key terms and concepts are introduced. Case examples add interest, especially since a range of outcomes is noted including unexpected and “unsuccessful” outcomes.

The book’s focus on clarity and key information would be welcomed by busy trainees or practitioners. Headings, layout, chapter summaries and indexing are designed well for efficient learning and for locating specific information readily. The book is not sufficient as a “how to” manual for CBT, but this is not its intended purpose. The focus of disorders is on adult mental health (selected mood and anxiety disorders, eating disorders, hallucinations and delusions, and borderline personality disorder). Substance use problems, developmental issues, learning disability, and physical health issues are not covered.

This book would be suitable for postgraduate or advanced trainees in relevant disciplines, such as psychiatry, psychology, mental health nursing, social work, general practice, or occupational therapy. It would also be useful for supervisors and teachers in these disciplines as a training tool and reference. Another group who could benefit from this book is practitioners who work from other theoretical models and want to expand or update their knowledge of CBT. For practitioners working primarily with substance use issues, this text could serve to improve or update understanding of CBT treatment for comorbid mental health issues as well as knowledge of component techniques that are applicable with substance use issues, such as CBT formulation or challenging unhelpful thoughts. While there is some emphasis on the United Kingdom and psychiatric practice, a wide range of other practitioners or trainees are likely to find value from this well-written and well-presented text.