

The chapters are punctuated with notes about problems to anticipate and how to troubleshoot them. These are especially helpful, providing the reader with a conceptual framework for understanding difficulties and problem-focused approaches to manage them. This book empowers the clinician with the knowledge required to develop a solid case formulation and exercise good clinical judgment in the implementation of the rich variety of therapeutic techniques described. This book is an invaluable resource for the clinician, the CBT trainee and the CBT instructor.

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Oxford Handbook of Anxiety and Related Disorders

Edited by Martin M. Anthony and Murray B. Stein

(Eds.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. pp. 701, £60.00 (hb). ISBN: 978-0-19-530703-0.

doi:10.1017/S1352465811000178

This is a long, heavy book. It consists of 51 chapters providing comprehensive reviews by respected, mostly North American authors. Each chapter presents the phenomenology, epidemiology and approaches to understanding, assessing and treating anxiety and related disorders, both psychologically and pharmaceutically. If you are a busy clinician I would not recommend buying this book, although that is not to say that it would not be interesting or useful. However, if you are a (clinical) researcher this book is likely to be very useful. If you are a mental health librarian I would advise buying this book, if you have not already done so.

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Overcoming Health Anxiety: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques

Edited by Rob Willson and David Veale

London: Constable and Robinson, 2009. pp. 318, £10.99 (pb). ISBN: 978-1-84529-824.

doi:10.1017/S135246581100018X

Health related concerns affect us all at one time or another and, in some instances, we also experience anxiety about the possible impact health problems might have on us and our future. For most of us, health anxiety is mild, short-lived and an appropriate response, but for others it can become excessive and a debilitating and chronic condition. Until relatively recently, health anxiety was thought to be treatment resistant. However, research has shown that health anxiety can be successfully treated with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), but until now, little self-help information has been written for people with health anxiety.

Overcoming Health Anxiety is written as a self-help guide, where the authors use a structured, step-by-step approach to explain how health anxiety develops and is maintained and then teaches the reader how to develop effective methods of overcoming the problem.

The book is divided into 15 chapters and starts with a thorough description of health anxiety and other co-occurring difficulties. Next come chapters on how health anxiety develops and is maintained; the reader is helped to draw out their own vicious flower, which helps to explain what needs to be done to overcome the problem. Further chapters look at how the reader can set goals, deal with anxiety-provoking thoughts and images, and explain the process of worrying. Other chapters aim to instruct to reader to decrease self-focused attention, checking and reassurance seeking, repeated visits to the doctor and also encourages the reader to face their fears by undertaking exposure. The book also includes a chapter on fear of death and, interestingly, the fear of vomiting, which often overlaps with health anxiety in terms of excessive worrying, checking and avoidance behaviours. The book concludes with a guide to medication on health anxiety, where the potential benefits and disadvantages of taking medication are discussed.

Overcoming Health Anxiety is a welcome addition to the Overcoming series. The book provides a good combination of information about health anxiety, with techniques and tools to address the problem. The text is jargon-free, clear and easy to read. It is very accessible and there are many tables and figures that help to illustrate key points. As with any self-help material, this book could be used in a range of ways and also has potential as a useful resource book for busy clinicians.

Overall, I believe that the book will be of assistance to people suffering from health anxiety. I have asked clients to read the book and they find it helpful and particularly like the chapter on “Overcoming health anxiety in action”, where the authors present case examples and draw up a number of vicious flowers. I also thought this was one of the best chapters in the book. The book’s shortcomings are fairly minor. The book might have benefited from being slightly more structured, for example by encouraging the reader to practise the techniques presented early in the book before continuing reading and learning about other change methods. Also, the chapter on “Helping someone overcome health anxiety”, which is written for family members or friends of people with health anxiety, is, in my opinion, too short. Finally, I think that some readers might find it upsetting when they read about famous figures throughout history that have been reported as having health anxiety and see that Adolf Hitler is on that list. There are better ways to normalize this problem.

In summary, I would say that this is a well written self-help book and it is definitely worth buying. I will continue recommending it for people I work with who experience health anxiety and colleagues treating this often debilitating problem.

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Overcoming Anxiety, Stress and Panic: A Five Areas Approach (2nd edn.)

Edited by Chris Williams

London: Hodder Arnold, 2010. pp. 356, £22.99 (pb). ISBN: 978-0-340-98655-4.

doi:10.1017/S1352465811000191

This text is based on Professor Chris Williams’ jargon free cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) model integrating complex elements of cognitive behavioural theory into workable self-help techniques. Williams is the Director of Glasgow Institute of Psychosocial