

Reviews

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Ian Andrew James, *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Older People: Interventions for Those with and without Dementia*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2010, 256 pp., pbk £24.99, ISBN 13: 978 1 84905 100 2.

This book is a welcome addition to the practice of psychological therapies with older people, as there is little doubt that mental health services will encounter increasing numbers of older people experiencing anxiety and/or depression in coming years. Psychological therapies such as cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) are recommended by the UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) as integral to the treatment offered to all experiencing anxiety or depression. Furthermore, the efficacy of CBT for late-life anxiety and depression has been supported by controlled trials and recent meta-analyses. Despite the plethora of CBT guides and manuals now available for practising clinicians, few provide detailed and up-to-date guidance regarding the practice of CBT with older people.

The early chapters introduce the basic tenets that underpin cognitive therapy, such as recognising thinking biases; conducting a CBT assessment; and ending therapy. James argues cogently that CBT with older people requires specific adaptations to assessment, formulation and interventions in order to enhance its acceptability and outcome. He systematically describes what these adaptations should involve. For example, there is a helpful discussion of how changes in executive functioning affect the experience and presentation of psychological problems in late life, and the associated adjustments to therapy that this therefore requires. A running theme in the book is that to be effective, CBT needs to be conducted in a competent, careful way that is faithful to its core tenets, on the one hand, whilst responding to the specific needs of older people, on the other. Existing models and frameworks that can be used to aid psychological formulation of distress in late life are systematically synthesised. Some perspectives are generic and would apply to therapy with a person of any age, whilst others are specific to an understanding of older people. CBT approaches that can be useful with people of any age, such as the 'continuum' technique, are described particularly well.

There appear to be some gaps in James' selected emphases, and although he demonstrates well how generic CBT approaches are relevant to older people, more could be made of how problem complexity and chronicity in late-life depression requires wider-ranging approaches to formulation and intervention. Similarly, whilst the need to include gerontological factors in working with distress in late life is highlighted, the full range of important psycho-social and life-span development issues and their potential to inform CBT with older people are somewhat overlooked. Surprisingly, mindfulness and acceptance-based

cognitive-behavioural approaches and their potential use with older people are not discussed in any great depth, and a notable absence is the recent work of Thomas Lynch and colleagues on the adaptation of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy with older people. The author's attempt in chapter 10 to provide a comprehensive approach to the practice of challenging behaviour in dementia runs the risk of over-inclusiveness where the remit of CBT may well have been broadened to include other approaches such as functional analytic interventions.

The later chapters are devoted to the wider application of CBT practice. Helping alleviate challenging behaviour in people with dementia is considered but other complex presentations, such as late-onset psychosis and suicidal behaviour, are not covered. Reflecting the author's background in CBT training, an excellent chapter is devoted to the issue of developing and maintaining clinical competence in CBT practice. The training manual for the revised Cognitive Therapy Rating Scale, which is essentially a guide to the 'nuts and bolts' of conducting CBT, is presented in depth as an appendix.

The more experienced practitioner might find the contrasting features of the book interesting. For example, models relevant to formulating distress in dementia, such as the author's Conceptualisation of Dementia Model, are discussed alongside existing more traditionally defined CBT approaches to depression and anxiety, such as the Comprehensive Conceptualisation Framework for Older People (Laidlaw *et al.* 2003). Similarly, detailed descriptions of change methods in traditional CBT that are likely to be useful with older people are included alongside a chapter describing the 'Newcastle' CBT approach to formulating and intervening with challenging behaviour in dementia. This attempt at inclusiveness will appeal to clinicians working with older people in secondary care, where distress in dementia and co-morbidity with depression are commonly seen.

This book is both detailed and accessible. Case material is used well to illustrate the various CBT approaches that are described. Guidance is offered in an authoritative and empirically grounded manner and many of the key issues facing both experienced and trainee CBT therapists working with older people are covered. The book is therefore a useful resource for trainers, clinicians and therapists of all levels of experience. A timely addition to the text by Laidlaw *et al.* (2003), due to be updated later in 2011 (see Laidlaw, Thompson, and Gallagher-Thompson forthcoming), this book should be recommended reading for clinicians using CBT with older people, particularly those working in new Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services where training and supervision arrangements may not fully cover late-life presentations and issues of ageing.

References

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University of Hull, UK

CHRIS CLARKE, CHRIS REWSTON
and ESMÉ MONIZ-COOK

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Dale Dannefer and Chris Phillipson (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Social Gerontology*, Sage Publications, London, 2010, 712 pp., hbk £90, ISBN 13: 978 1 4129 3464 0.

This is the latest in a number of handbooks and books which cover a wide range of topics and issues in gerontology. Fortunately, as the editors point out, they all take a slightly different perspective, and this particular handbook focuses solely on social gerontology. It is both multidisciplinary and global. A global approach is of growing interest across the world for policy makers and practitioners, and indeed many students expect such an approach although up to about ten years ago, with a few exceptions, the emphasis was very United Kingdom or Europe based. Not only are the topics in this volume multidisciplinary but also the authors of the chapters come from all over the world and are acknowledged experts.

The editors have taken five main themes, in sections of roughly the same length. Section One contains disciplinary overviews with summaries of findings from key disciplinary areas within social gerontology. These include psychology, history, economics, social anthropology, demography and epidemiology. There is also a chapter on the environment and one on disabilities, which do not fit quite as neatly into the disciplines but are nevertheless of great relevance.

Section Two covers social relationships and social differences and topics include social inequality, gender and ageing, the role of religion, intergenerational ties, social networks and friendships in later life. Section Three covers individual characteristics and change in later life. These chapters examine different aspects of individual ageing, including self and identity, cognitive processes and biosocial interactions, and the impacts of physical and psychological ageing. The importance of the lifecourse and issues such as loneliness and ageing bodies are covered here.

Section Four is specifically to do with comparative perspectives and cultural innovations including ageing and development, ageing in a global context, migration and cross-cultural perspectives on the very important topic of grandparents. It includes chapters that are specifically focused on particular areas of the world. The final section is concerned with policy issues. These include developments in social policy, long-term care, technology and older people, end-of-life issues, work and retirement, crime and older people, and the politics of old age.

Does this book cover all of the issues one would expect of a handbook? Clearly not all of them could be included, but it is perhaps a pity that so little attention has been given to housing. It is also perhaps surprising that there is little on the contribution of older people in the voluntary and other sectors. Each chapter is well referenced – indeed in one or two chapters the number of pages of references