

All chapters contain a (believable) composite case example, illustrating how key strategies were implemented to enhance work, navigate obstacles, or maintain gains post-therapy. A few case examples provide a brief transcription of how a strategy was introduced: for instance with panic disorder and agoraphobia, an introduction to non-catastrophic interpretation of sensations is illustrated. Some of the suggested add-ons to standard treatment that a therapist might consider using with a difficult case seem instead to be useful suggestions for working with any client, although the need for tailoring is emphasized at regular intervals.

Possibly because of the book's dedication to evidence-based content, chapters vary to the degree to which they acknowledge therapist factors, and all the woolly stuff that might go in to forming the therapeutic relationship. There is also a variation in the degree to which they discuss alternative therapies, or suggest different modalities to complement CBT. Most give an overview of evidence-based pharmacological treatments. Mindfulness makes an appearance in the chapters on alcohol use, depression, GAD and eating disorders, and the chapter on schizophrenia considers engaging with family and home factors.

Some consideration is given to interpersonal processes, and there is an occasional nod towards attachment-related factors. Despite talking a lot about evidence, most chapters manage to communicate a sufficiently human feel, both in their approach to you as a reader and their approach to the client. Predominantly, this happens through the suggestions given for practice and important considerations for individual client group, but the chapter on "couple distress" (although informative) has a more evidence heavy and impersonal style of delivery.

On the whole, the book has a tidy, capable feel about it that instills a sense that better informed and tailored technique can go the distance in making positive changes happen, and stick, for clients.

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Overcoming Chronic Pain: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques

Frances Cole, Helen Macdonald, Catherine Carus and Hazel Howden-Leach
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This self-help guide on chronic pain is divided into two distinct, yet complementary, parts: *What is Chronic Pain?* and *Overcoming Chronic Pain*. The book aims to "help you understand pain and its effects on your body and also looks at medical investigations and drug treatments . . . managing . . . activity levels, solving every day problems, overcoming mood changes and unhelpful thinking patterns, coping with poor sleep and using relaxation techniques." I think that it succeeds in its aim, with the structure of the book lending itself to the authors' hope that readers will be able to either "read through the whole book quickly" or pick it up when needed. The book is clearly written and structured, thus making it readily accessible to the general public.

Part 1, *What is Chronic Pain?*, is comprised of five chapters, which are effectively psycho-educational in purpose. "Understanding the Impact of Pain and Making Changes" details information on the person-centred, and cognitive behavioural approaches. It invites the reader to begin to formulate their own experience of pain in this way, as well as identifying potential changes. This is supplemented with some motivational enhancement writing. "Understanding

Chronic Pain and Pain Systems” distinguishes between acute and chronic pain, as well as elucidating the different facets of these systems. It also provides some brief information on the gate control theory of pain, and the neuro-matrix theory (I felt the latter could have been explained more clearly). “Understanding Investigations for Pain” explains why someone might need to have blood tests, x-rays or scans, and the implications of any results. “Understanding the Roles of Healthcare Professionals” informs the reader about professionals with whom they may have, or might, come into contact. This includes the role of a psychologist, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and pain management programmes. “Understanding Medicines and Using Them Better” guides the reader through different classes of medication, their purpose, as well as their limitations and common side-effects. It also has good information on stopping or reducing medication.

Part 2, *Overcoming Chronic Pain*, provides the reader with the information to make the changes that are elicited in Part 1. Each of the 12, relatively short chapters focus on a discrete topic: Setting Goals, Giving Yourself Rewards, Understanding Pacing Skills, Getting Fitter and Being More Active, Understanding Problem-Solving, Understanding Sleep and Sleep Problems, Relaxation, Pain, Communication and Relationships, Managing Depression, Anxiety and Anger, Acceptance, Maintaining Progress and Managing Setbacks, and Looking to the Future and Managing Work. Most of the chapters rely, effectively, on psycho-education and behavioural methods to manage various problems. However, the chapter on depression, anxiety and anger is a very clear, and usefully repetitive account of cognitive techniques. I felt that inclusion of the last three chapters, especially “Acceptance” (which considers Mindfulness), was ambitious, and they were not as useful as the rest of the book. A brief section on further Useful Information is made up of details on relevant organizations, self-help groups, books and publications, tapes and CDs, and a video.

Throughout the book, each chapter follows the same basic structure. First, the aims are identified, with subsequent information broken into subsections relating to these aims. At the end of each chapter is a useful summary. There are often diagrams/tables, or lists of questions or examples for the reader to refer to which are valuable, as well as references to other relevant parts of the book. The reader is often asked to record information, either in the book, or in their own notebook. I think that it would have been worthwhile to have had more space to record information in the book itself, so that it becomes a workbook. The self-help guide also has a number of case studies that illustrate the application of the different methods described.

Overall, I felt that this self-help guide was well written, and covered a broad range of useful and interesting topics. I suspect that it will be useful to people who experience chronic pain, and to practitioners new to the field.

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