

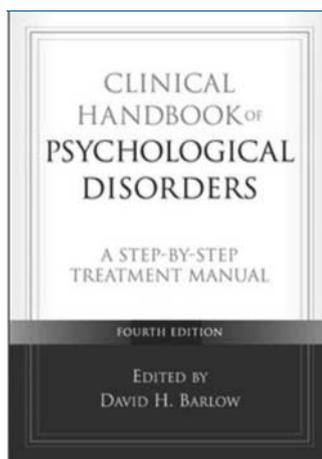
details the symptoms and the empirical support of the inclusion as well as available treatments. Part II seeks to include a number of disorders in the obsessive–compulsive spectrum that are currently classified elsewhere in DSM–IV. The chapter layout is similar to Part I and the disorders range from the impulse-control disorders to tics and the autism spectrum.

Each chapter uses a case vignette to illustrate the disorder or subtype in question and its treatment. These are helpful in clarifying some of the more unusual presentations and are generally succinct. Some of the treatment examples are long and I found it difficult to stay interested, although those practising psychological therapies regularly may find these more useful. The treatment sections are predominantly related to psychological approaches and focus largely on cognitive and behavioural approaches. There are a few chapters where no medical intervention is mentioned in the treatment, despite giving differential diagnosis of mental illness, but for the most part medication is included, if only to point out the lack of evidence for its efficacy. The book is generally easy to read and chapters can be read in isolation if a particular subject is of interest, as much of the general information on classification and treatment is repeated regularly.

The preface suggests that this book is aimed at students, researchers and practitioners. Given the significant slant towards psychology, it is more likely to appeal to practitioners in this area, although doctors in training may find some of the vignettes useful. I was not convinced that all the disorders could be included within the obsessive–compulsive spectrum, but the authors gave balanced arguments throughout and acknowledge the lack of clinical evidence available to them.

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Clinical Handbook of Psychological Disorders: a Step-By-Step Treatment Manual (4th edn)

Edited by David H. Barlow.
Guilford Press. 2007.
US\$75.00 (hb). 689pp.
ISBN: 9781593855727

‘Books’, says Wessely, ‘are not very important for us’ (‘And now the book reviews’, *British Journal of Psychiatry* 2000; 177, 388–89). For once he is wrong. This is the fourth edition of what has become a standard American text, well nearly so – the chapters by Tarrier and by Fairburn, Cooper and Shafran keep the UK on the map. Barlow begins by extolling the virtues of evidence-based practice but for once he is only partly right. He discusses psychological therapies (cognitive–behavioural therapy plus variants) for the common mental disorders – anxiety, mood and substance

use disorders, psychosis, eating, sex and borderline personality disorders, couple distress – but a chapter on generalised anxiety disorder is missing. Most chapters do review the available evidence and define the evidence base but the strength of this very good book is the depth of clinical advice. The authors have considerable clinical experience and publish therapy plans and transcripts of ‘who says what to whom’ to prove it.

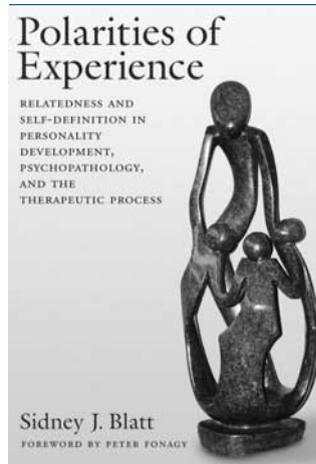
I direct a service that provides cognitive–behavioural therapy for people with anxiety and depressive disorders. We treat 1000 new patients a year, face-to-face or via the internet, and so should be blasé about the first half of the book that deals with these disorders. I’m not. I am about to photocopy chapters to give to my staff who work with the relevant patient groups. It is that good. The opening chapter on panic/agoraphobia is a masterpiece and the chapter that describes a unified protocol for the treatment of emotional disorders is exploring what we all know to be true – the anxiety and depressive disorders are frequently comorbid and we need therapy models for such individuals. There are three chapters on the psychological treatment of depression, which is appropriate given that the burden is large and current initiatives do not seem to be reducing it.

The second half of the book deals with psychotherapy for the functional psychoses, borderline personality disorder and substance use disorders. All chapters are useful but for me the chapters on borderline disorder and alcohol use disorders suddenly made explicit how one might actually treat a patient with these disorders in a way that endless research reports have not done. For eating disorders the author attempts a trans-diagnostic approach with a unified programme for anorexia, bulimia and eating disorders not otherwise specified, which seems eminently sensible to this ignorant reviewer.

In short, it is a great resource for psychotherapists. All staff should have a copy.

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Polarities of Experience: Relatedness and Self-Definition in Personality Development, Psychopathology and the Therapeutic Process

By Sidney J. Blatt.
American Psychological Association. 2008.
US\$69.95 (hb). 404pp.
ISBN: 9781433803147

It is a daunting task to be set to review a book that marks the culmination of over 50 years of study, research and writing in the field of personality development and psychopathology. Professor Blatt has written extensively in this field and has moved with the times, incorporating the latest thinking and research from