Book Review

Treatment of Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Therapist Guides and Patient Manual

Gavin Andrews, Alison E.J. Mahoney, Megan J. Hobbs, & Margo R. Goderson

Oxford University Press, 2016

This BOOK begins by providing the reader with a succinct history and aetiology of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), focusing on the updates from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th edition) (DSM-5) texts. Since the term was first used, the classification of GAD has undergone numerous revisions. The requirements of an individual to meet threshold criteria, which are embedded in the categorical tradition of the DSM, are contributing factors to the difficulties in the classification and diagnosis of GAD. Furthermore, professionals have also struggled to obtain empirical evidence to differentiate GAD as a specific anxiety disorder; these issues are explored further in the first chapter.

The authors give a concise overview of assessment measures used to identify anxiety, which provides the reader with information and advice. However, there is a strong focus on the benefits of each measure, such as the levels of validity and internal consistency. In my opinion, this section would have benefited from greater critique when comparing measures with relation to the empirical research that is discussed.

The section ‘Treatment effectiveness’ provides cogent, objective summaries of the contemporary models used in the treatment of GAD from a cognitive-behavioural perspective. There is also a review of recent literature around the effectiveness of iCBT (integrated cognitive behavioral therapy) programmes, and the reader is provided with examples of how each model can be applied to specific interventions. There are excellent examples of psychological formulations that utilise original case studies, and the authors offer directions for future research. These are valuable for individuals interested in the assessment and treatment of anxiety disorders.

The ‘User Treatment Manual’ provides activities that can be used during assessment, formulation and intervention when working with individuals with GAD. There are a number of practical resources in the appendices which could easily be adapted when working with different clinical populations.

This book can be used as a practical guide specifically for clinicians working with individuals with GAD. Existing research is adequately explained and the authors use a balance of qualitative and quantitative evidence to demonstrate their points. As such, this text will be a valuable resource for either qualified professionals or individuals completing studies. The book facilitated a space for reflection on my own practice working with individuals with GAD in learning disability services. It benefits clients by outlining a structured and accessible treatment manual that offers the clinician a variety of models by which to plan the most appropriate interventions.

Luke Beardmore
Assistant Clinical Psychologist, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; luke.beardmore@cwpt.nhs.uk