



review

Mentalization-based Treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder: A Practical Guide

By Anthony Bateman & Peter Fonagy. Oxford University Press. 2006. £19.95 (pb). 204pp. ISBN 0198570902

The development of effective treatments for people with personality disorders remains a major challenge for mental health professionals. A recent Cochrane review of psychological treatments for borderline personality disorder highlighted the limited current evidence base but concluded that both dialectical behaviour therapy and mentalisation-based partial hospitalisation showed evidence of effectiveness. Mentalisation is the ability to focus on mental states, or representations of the world, in oneself and others,

particularly in explanations of behaviour. It is a mostly preconscious, imaginative activity, containing both cognitive and affective elements. This practical guide to mentalisation-based treatment makes a welcome contribution to the ongoing development and dissemination of effective treatment strategies for borderline personality disorder.

Aimed at enthusiastic but psychotherapeutically inexperienced mental health professionals, the book begins with a description of mentalisation and its disturbance in borderline personality disorder. This is followed by a description of the structure of mentalisation-based treatment, in which detailed information about the authors' specific treatment programme is balanced with explanation of the underlying rationale. After comprehensive chapters on assessment, the authors discuss the appropriate therapeutic stance. Finally, they explore mentalisation techniques for use in

individual and group therapy, concluding with a chapter responding to common questions about mentalisation-based treatments.

Overall, this book succeeds in providing a practical guide to mentalisation-based treatment without relying on extensive prior knowledge and will be accessible to a range of practitioners. Explicit links are made between theory and practice in the early chapters, and techniques shared with other psychotherapies are consistently examined from a mentalisation-based perspective. Text boxes highlighting important themes facilitate return to key points and chapters on technique are amplified with transcripts illustrating their use.

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correction

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