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The basic objective of this series is to provide therapists with practical, evidence-based treatment guidance for the most common disorders seen in clinical practice – and to do so in a “reader-friendly” manner. Each book in the series is both a compact “how-to-do” reference on a particular disorder for use by professional clinicians in their daily work, as well as an ideal educational resource for students and for practice-oriented continuing education.

The most important feature of the books is that they are practical and “reader-friendly.” All are structured similarly and all provide a compact and easy-to-follow guide to all aspects that are relevant in real-life practice. Tables, boxed clinical “pearls”, marginal notes, and summary boxes assist orientation, while checklists provide tools for use in daily practice.

Eating Disorders

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Preface

This book describes the well-known eating disorders comprising anorexia nervosa (AN), bulimia nervosa (BN), eating disorders not otherwise specified (EDNOS), and binge eating disorder (BED). Despite the serious nature of eating disorders, and AN in particular (which has the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric disorders), the development of clinically effective treatments that would prove to be successful in the majority of our patients remains elusive. Yet each day, in consulting rooms in hospitals, clinics, and private practice, patients afflicted with an eating disorder turn to therapists to provide them with treatment to alleviate their suffering. And despite the ego-syntonic nature of AN, patients suffer an ever decreasing quality of life. Even those clinicians who have a special expertise in the treatment of eating disorders find themselves in despair trying to persuade a seriously ill patient to accept treatment with absolutely no success.

This is where this book can help. It builds on existing knowledge as well as the enormous wealth of clinical experience that the authors have developed over the past three decades. It assumes a basic understanding of therapeutic intervention and some clinical training. This book will be of interest, not only to those clinicians who have developed a special expertise in eating disorders, but to psychologists, psychiatrists, general practitioners, dietitians, social workers, nurses, and other allied mental health practitioners as well.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter describes the different eating disorders (AN, BN, EDNOS, and BED) and then sets out to show how they are defined and diagnosed. Empirically supported diagnostic and assessment techniques are then reviewed. Chapter 2 explores the theoretical models which underpinning the development and maintenance of eating disorders and their implications for treatment. In Chapter 3, practical strategies are provided to facilitate undertaking the initial interviews and to ensure that the appropriate medical assessment and laboratory investigations have been done. Chapter 4 provides a detailed practical account using in-session dialogs and didactic pearls to illustrate as clearly as possible the psychological techniques and interventions available to the clinician. Potential obstacles to treatment, especially with the poorly motivated and uncooperative patients are given special attention. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a series of case examples which illustrate the complexities of these disorders and the obstacles to successful treatment. The appendices provide handouts and additional information to use in treatment sessions.

Eating disorders remain an interesting challenge for clinicians. Because these disorders are heterogeneous in nature, one treatment does not fit all. As a result, this book has not been written as a “cookbook” or manual but rather as a practical guide so that the clinician can better tailor the treatment to the needs of each particular patient. It also provides helpful strategies and clinical pearls to assist the clinician especially at those difficult moments when confronted by a recalcitrant patient. There is much didactic material that can be shared with patients and when all else seems lost, some humor to keep the ship afloat.

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to a large number of people who have contributed in their own special way to the success of this book. These include editors Danny Wedding and Linda Carter Sobell, and Robert Dimpleby of Hogrefe and Huber Publishers, whose guidance and support was invaluable and very much appreciated. We are also indebted to the late Peter Beumont, not only for his innovation in clinical practice, but for his determination to leave no stone unturned in the quest to alleviate the suffering for those with an eating disorder.

This book is dedicated to all our patients, both past and present from whom we have learnt so much. They have challenged us and, unfortunately, at times found us wanting, but this has inspired us to continue our search to better understand and to find new ways to treat these debilitating disorders.

We are very grateful to our wonderful colleague and friend, Peter Herman, for his invaluable encouragement and support throughout this endeavor and for his special brand of humor which got us through the difficult times.

The objective of this new series is to provide clinicians with practical evidence-based treatments for the most common disorders in clinical practice but written in a reader friendly and practical manner. To this end, we would like to thank Jonathan S. Abramowitz for setting the benchmark in this series and for future books such as ours. We would also like to thank Christopher Fairburn for the up to date information regarding the publication of his EDE-Q6. To Cindy Li, who despite her onerous workload, found the time to type drafts and format figures, our much appreciated gratitude. A special word of thanks to Ethel Harris, Eva Naumann, and Alex Blaszczyński for their contribution to formatting the diagrams and to Belinda Ingram for her assistance with the final draft.

Finally to our families, for their enduring love, patience, encouragement, and affection.

Dedication

To Wren and our children, Justin and Lauren, for their enduring love and affection and to my mentor, colleague, and friend, the late Peter Beumont for his inspiration and wisdom.

SWT

To Peter, Lisa/Leah, Eric, and Saretta for all they are to me and to Dick Bootzin and Ken Howard for all they did to help me to become a psychologist and therapist.

JP

To Anne Hall who provided inspiration and superb mentoring in my “salad days,” and to Kevin and Beatrix for their enduring love and patience.

PH

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Because the greater majority of patients who have eating disorders are female, we have used feminine nouns and pronouns throughout this book.