

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Cure and Care of Neurosis. Theory and Practice of Behavioural Psychotherapy**, by ISAAC MARKS. Wiley, New York, 1981. 316 pp. \$26.95

This volume is an expansion of the Salmon Committee Lectures delivered to the New York Academy of Medicine in 1979. Primarily, it is an overview of Marks's considerable contributions to the field of psychotherapy, fleshed out with history, epidemiology, and theory. While the book contains something of interest for investigators, specialists, patients, and health services planners, its main value is probably for clinicians wishing to add behavioral treatment of phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorders to their tool kits. Sexual disorders, sexual skills deficits, social skills deficits, pathological grieving, and nightmares are also dealt with, but less extensively.

The centerpiece of the volume is what Marks calls "the exposure principle". This means that the patient "is persuaded to enter and stay in his or her phobic situation until he or she feels better, and to do this repeatedly until it becomes so customary that it holds no more terrors". As the historical chapter shows, this principle was apparently known and practiced until sometime near the turn of the century, but then somehow got lost. When Marks and his colleagues took up the problem in the late 1960s, both psychoanalysts and behaviorists thought that what he was doing would make people worse. However, a series of well designed studies by Marks and others demonstrated that the approach works, often with dramatic rapidity, that the benefits last, and that real life exposure is more effective than any other known psychotherapeutic technique for phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Some of the effective techniques for treating sexual disorders, nightmares, and pathological grief also appear to involve an element of exposure to stimuli which are habitually avoided.

It is uncertain what the mechanism of improvement is. Characteristically, until evidence to the contrary comes along, Marks opts for the simplest hypothesis, i.e. that exposure *per se* is the active therapeutic ingredient. The major part of the book is devoted to detailed clinical examples, illustrating and evaluating the use of the exposure principle for the range of clinical problems for which it has proved useful. Not surprisingly, this requires more ingenuity than one might think, given the apparent simplicity of the exposure principle as stated. Other behavioral techniques, such as operant procedures, biofeedback, relaxation training, and non-behavioral approaches are discussed, but decidedly as secondary themes.

One chapter deals with drug treatment of neuroses and the drug augmentation of behavioral treatments. Marks's research has mostly indicated that drug treatments do not add very much to simple exposure. The work of others suggests that tricyclic antidepressant or monoamine oxidase inhibiting drugs are quite effective in treating agoraphobia with panic attacks either alone or additively with exposure therapy. Still others find that chlorimipramine is effective in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorders. The resolution of these differences and the specific indications for drug, behavioral, and combined therapies remain to be worked out.

The chapters on theory are of most interest to investigators and specialists. Marks takes the position that both "the" psychoanalytic and conditioning models of neurosis are inadequate and should be discarded. As first stated, this sounds like a bit of over-kill. There are, in fact, many poss-

ible psychoanalytic and conditioning models of neurosis, and models can be derived from either school which do not run afoul of Marks's results. In view of the opposition he encountered from both sides, the position is understandable, and on closer examination does not come off quite as radical as it sounds initially. He does not offer an alternate theory, but sketches some preliminary suggestions along the lines of conditioning as modified by biological factors.

The final chapter deals with service delivery and cost effectiveness, giving a description of the program which the author developed in London, along with some evaluation data which is quite intriguing, though in need of extension and confirmation. He holds out the possibility of a quantum leap in cost effectiveness through findings that exposure in groups is also effective, that self-treatment through exposure homework assignments is effective, and that therapists without doctoral degrees can be trained in a few months to get results as good as anyone else's. The book ends with a cogent plea for modification of out-moded professional roles and reimbursement patterns which inhibit the application of the therapeutic and service delivery principles presented in the book. How long this model of service delivery remains viable will depend on what new techniques may eventually prove more efficient than exposure therapy, and how long it takes to develop them.

The presentation of clinical issues is simple, well documented, lucid, and practical. The sections on theory are scholarly, but at times difficult to follow.

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**A Guide to Social Skill Training**, by ROGER ELLIS and DOROTHY WHITTINGTON. Croom Helm, London, 1981. 240 pp. £12.95

This title can have different meanings according to one's professional interest. As a clinical psychologist, I approached the book with an expectation of seeing neatly summarized and elucidated a variety of approaches and techniques to help in therapy of adults and children who have deficits in normal social skills. I was disappointed as I was met by a wide overview, rather turgidly written, of social skills training as applied mostly to the course for health visitors and undergraduates at Ulster Polytechnic. The introductory chapter lifted my spirits with a categorization of social skills training into remedial work with behaviourally disturbed patients, developmental work with children and specialized work with students and trainees for professional employment. But sadly, my hopes for the first two of these categories was dampened as I read on.

The authors attempt to encompass too wide a definition of social skills training and would have been wiser to confine themselves to training professional groups in interview skills, empathy and warmth. This is clearly their field and they have developed a degree of expertise and experience. It is an important part of the social skills training arena, but the changes expected in the social skills of normal students are subtle and slight compared to the goals in psychiatric treatment of socially handicapped individuals.

The point made is that professionals working in close