BOOK REVIEW

Tailoring manualized treatment to the needs of the client: a review of flexible applications of cognitive processing therapy: Evidence-Based Treatment Methods, by Tara Galovski, Reginald Nixon, Debra Kaysen, Academic Press, 2020. 282 pp., $125.00 (Paperback). ISBN: 9780128167151; $125.00 (eBook) ISBN: 9780128168851. Link to publisher: https://www.elsevier.com/books/flexible-applications-of-cognitive-processing-therapy/galovski/978-0-12-816715-1

Flexible Applications of Cognitive Processing Therapy: Evidence-Based Treatment Methods (Galovski, Nixon, & Kaysen, 2020) is billed by Galovski, Nixon, and Kaysen as a ‘roadmap to applying Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) to a wide-range of complex clients in various clinical settings.’ In her forward, Dr. Patricia Resick, the developer of CPT, describes the text as one that should ‘sit on the shelf next to the treatment manual for easy access to expert guidance.’ To accomplish this goal, the text is structured in three parts: (1) an orientation and review of the evidence supporting use of CPT, (2) strategies to navigate common concerns which arise when providing CPT, and (3) applying CPT at the systems level. The text leads a movement towards viewing CPT not as simply a ‘cookbook’ to be followed step-by-step, but rather as a method of understanding and applying necessary theoretical principles, while there are areas for growth throughout the book, this text serves as an excellent resource in how to flexibly administer CPT in the service of a client.

Throughout the text, the authors provide approachable and practical resources for the practicing clinician. For example, Table 2.1 (pg. 24) provides a list of common ‘stuck points,’ sorted by trauma type, labelled as over-accommodated and assimilated, and supplemented with Socratic questions that could be used to challenge them. To better apply concepts introduced by the authors, readers are introduced to three clinical vignettes and the realistic challenges faced by providers to these clients are followed and explored throughout the book. The index also provides a guide to easily find strategies to overcome specific challenges, ranging from specific diagnostic comorbidities (e.g., depression, substance use disorders) to transdiagnostic processes (e.g., dysregulated affect, rumination).

In our opinion, the book’s second section, which directly addresses flexible applications, offers the most novel and clinically relevant aspects of the text. The authors start this section by coining the concept of ‘COTOs’ (a challenge to optimal therapy outcome) and providing a detailed overview of a case formulation approach to assist the clinician in identifying and monitoring COTOs. The authors then guide the reader through strategies to engage the client, navigate COTOs, and stay true to the therapy based on the four cornerstones of CPT (i.e., prioritizing assimilation vs. over-accommodation, skill in Socratic questioning, expression of affect, and out of session work). The second section is rounded out by entire chapters devoted to commonly cited COTOs, including comorbidities, complex trauma histories, and emotion dysregulation, providing detailed responses to these often referenced concerns associated with providing CPT. These strategies are well-aligned with current initiatives in the field of mental health, including measurement-based care and routine evaluation of treatment progress and the treatment plan. An example of this is found in Table 5.1 (pg. 81), which lists common reasons a client is not showing improvement in their PTSD symptoms and suggests possible ways for the clinician to intervene.

With the decision to provide specific approaches for specific clinical challenges, it becomes easier for the reader to notice some of the clinical challenges that are largely absent from the text. Little attention is afforded to specific, common psychosocial stressors, including justice-involved individuals and those experiencing housing instability, and how CPT may need to be tailored or augmented for clients experiencing these challenges. Further, strategies to apply CPT among those who are diagnosed with psychotic spectrum disorders or bipolar disorder are not provided. As part of multiple sections (e.g., managing mood disorders, managing characterological features), the authors briefly introduce how to approach CPT when working with a client at risk for suicide; however, a full standalone section may have been beneficial to describe strategies to enhance the care and safety of these clients (e.g., integrating Safety Planning into CPT while maintaining fidelity). These omissions also reflect the state of the larger CPT research literature, which has only begun to explore these unfortunately common and particularly challenging circumstances.

Another area that is unfortunately limited is the authors’ coverage of more broadly defined flexible CPT, including combining interventions (e.g., SMART-CPT, repeated Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation), changing the density of CPT treatment (e.g., massed CPT), and strategies to dismantle or even restructure CPT (e.g., CPT-modular). In most cases, these strategies are introduced, but the text does not describe how to provide these protocols. Investigation of these more extreme examples of flexibly delivered CPT can explore the boundaries of how far the treatment can be bent before it is broken, improve our understanding of the critical treatment elements, and inform just how flexible CPT can be. We look forward to a second edition as these fields of research continue to develop.

Overall, the text tackles an important, and at times troubling, reality in psychotherapy: there is no manual, or set of manuals, that can be linearly followed to ensure optimal treatment outcome. The authors make explicit how they have achieved combined decades of success in administering
CPT by understanding its theoretical principles and flexibly applying the protocol. As previously noted, the book is no substitute for the CPT manual, but is a partner that should be close at hand. Readers looking for a consultant on a shelf, a troubleshooting guide to challenging clinical presentations, or a principled and theory-driven approach to quality care are sure to value this book.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding
This work was supported in part by the Office of Academic Affiliations, Advanced Fellowship Program in Mental Illness Research and Treatment, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System; Sierra Pacific Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center; the University of California San Francisco; the Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center for Veteran Suicide Prevention; and VA. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policy of the VA or the U.S. government.

Reference
Galovski, T. E., Nixon, R. D. V., & Kaysen, D. (2020). Flexible applications of cognitive processing therapy: Evidence-based treatment methods. London: Academic Press.