

## Book Review

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Child Anxiety Disorders: A Family-Based Treatment Manual for Practitioners

Jeffrey J. Wood, Bryce D. McLeod

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Reviewed by *Kelly Carlson, RN, MSN*

Jeffrey J. Wood, PhD, recipient of the Early Career Award of the American Educational Research Association's Counseling and Human Development Division, is an assistant professor at UCLA's Division of Psychological Studies in Education. His research investigating the effectiveness of the Building Confidence program for children with anxiety is the force behind the book. Bryce D. McLeod, PhD, is an assistant professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. McLeod's expertise in evidence-based treatments has been recognized by National Institutes for Health and National Institute of Mental Health research grants.

A unique aspect of this book is the evidenced-based research that serves as its foundation. The 15 outlined interventions used by the Building Confidence program have evidence-based legitimacy for their use in the treatment of childhood anxiety. Anxiety disorders are common in school-age children causing problems at home, school, and with peer relations. High levels of anxiety can severely affect school performance and provide the slippery slope to comorbidities such as social phobia, school avoidance, conduct disorder, mood disorder, and ADHD. The Building Confidence program addresses childhood anxiety from a combined CBT and family systems approach.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I, Chapters 1 and 2, defines specific anxiety disorders in children: separation anxiety,

social phobia, and generalized anxiety disorder. The authors give concise descriptors of what to look for in the diagnostic assessment and evaluation. Etiology of childhood anxiety disorders is explored from basic neurobiology to parental contributions. Part I, Chapter 3, summarizes the origins of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) strategies that target childhood anxiety and recent research findings.

Part II contains the 15-session family-based CBT program in a treatment manual format complete with homework handouts and step-by-step instructions. "A major goal of the Building Confidence program is to build the confidence of each family member." Parents are included as collaborators and are expected to participate significantly in the treatment modules. The authors take a flexible approach to participation and add helpful tips based on their research findings. They suggest that clinicians utilizing this program have prior experience with CBT, child anxiety, and family therapy or parent training; and receive training and supervision from a seasoned practitioner.

Each session or module is structured similarly: background explanations, goals, preparation materials, session, after-session, participants' time, and homework handouts. Homework pages have illustrations that can assist a child to identify distorted thinking that leads to anxiety and correct inaccurate schemata.

In the Appendix there are 12 pages of exposure techniques used to deal with commonly recognized childhood fears and anxieties.

Written with the clinician in mind, this book also is useful to parents and others who work with school-age children. The authors offer some simple solutions to complex problems. Treating anxiety within the context of the family is evidenced-based treatment. This is an excellent how-to.