



Handbook of Behavioural Family Therapy

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First published in 1988, behavioural family therapists worked in an area that had greatly changed since its inception over 20 years before. Growing out of the pioneering work of Gerald Patterson, Robert Paul Liberman, and Richard Stuart, whose backgrounds vary from psychology to psychiatry to social work, behavioural family therapy (BFT) had evolved to encompass systems theory, considerations of the therapeutic alliance, as well as approaches to accounting for and restructuring family members subjective experiences through cognitive strategies.

As BFT had not been the brain child of any one charismatic innovator, but rather of a wide array of clinicians and researchers developing and rigorously testing hypotheses, it is fitting that this much-needed summation of the field was a collaborative product of an array of well-established practitioners of the time. They discuss in Part 1 of the book the theoretical parameters of BFT, focusing on modular behavioural strategies, the indications for therapy, assessment of family problems, pertinent issues arising in clinical practice, and approaches to the problem of resistance to change. Contributors to Part 2 then apply theory to such clinical situations as parent training and helping families cope with patients suffering from developmental disabilities, alcoholism, schizophrenia, senile dementia, as well as anxiety, obsessive-compulsive, and depressive disorders. Specific attention is also given to acute inpatient and primary health-care settings.

While BFT had already proved quite effective in treating a great number of family problems, it was only in its infancy at the time of writing. As Falloon says in his overview all exponents of the method are constantly involved with the process of refinement, each clinician is a researcher, each family member is a research subject, and each researcher is contributing to clinical advancement.

This openness, in combination with a willingness to modify sacred tenets of behaviourism while adapting proven techniques from other family therapies, made this title a landmark in its field. As such, it was not only of interest to all clinicians and researchers with a behavioural slant, but also to all family therapists who wished to challenge themselves to develop an integrative approach."

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