

Book Review / Compte rendu

DeGangi, G. A. (2012). *The Dysregulated Adult: Integrated Treatment Approaches*. [*L'adulte dérégulé : approches de traitement intégré*.] London, UK: Academic Press. ISBN: 978-0-12-385011-9, 504 pages

Reviewed by: Ned Farley

ABSTRACT

This is a review of the newly published book, *The Dysregulated Adult: Integrated Treatment Approaches*, by Georgia A. DeGangi. The review summarizes the general purpose and content of the book, offers readers a more in-depth discussion of the content covered, and finally discusses this reviewer's perception of how well the author was able to succeed in addressing the topic.

RÉSUMÉ

Il s'agit d'un compte rendu de l'ouvrage récemment publié, *The Dysregulated Adult: Integrated Treatment Approaches*, de Georgia A. DeGangi. Ce compte rendu tente de résumer l'objet général et le contenu de l'ouvrage, afin de présenter aux lecteurs une discussion plus détaillée du contenu en cause, pour finalement présenter la perception du lecteur critique quant à la réussite de l'auteure dans sa tentative d'analyse du sujet.

The Dysregulated Adult: Integrative Treatment Approaches provides an in-depth exploration of the problems of self-regulation in adults. Although the inclusion of a section that briefly reviews attachment theories and emotional regulation issues with infants and children would be helpful, the author does provide an in-depth discussion of how emotional dysregulation appears in adults, including the variety of symptoms and diagnoses that clients may present with that mask and/or exacerbate the underlying dysregulatory problems that may have gone undiagnosed for years. Included are case examples as well as useful checklists, treatment strategies, and skills sheets to help clinicians in working with such cases as they present for treatment. The author's background and training are in occupational as well as clinical and developmental psychology, and her work with infants, children, and adults appears to have allowed her to understand the complex nature of emotional regulation issues. The integrative nature of her treatment approach includes attention to the neurobiological, interpersonal, and mind-body aspects of such symptoms.

This book is laid out in a well-structured and comprehensive format. It begins with overview chapters that discuss the general problems of self-regulation in adults, and then moves on to the issue of mood dysregulation specifically. From there, the book expounds on several specific diagnostic areas that may often intersect with mood dysregulation symptoms. These include chapters on anxiety, depression, eating disorders, sleep disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. The final two chapters are focused on issues of the sensory defensive adult and on the problems of attachment and intimacy

in adults. Each chapter includes a general description of the symptomatology, a case study or studies, and checklists for both client and clinician to assess specific symptoms as well as to understand the impact on general functioning. Throughout the specific chapters on diagnostic areas, there are referrals to the appendices that include 20 skills sheets aimed at specific ways to work with dysregulation.

Overall, the author's writing style moves between third-person descriptions of dysregulation and the varying ways in which symptoms emerge, and first-person case study accounts that include the treatment strategies utilized. This is an effective approach as it allows for both clinical understanding as well as the interpersonal context within which the client's life is not only lived but also how it presents itself within the therapeutic relationship.

Ultimately, this reviewer found the book to be a helpful addition to the literature. It is written in a way that makes it useful to researchers and experienced clinicians alike, as well as counsellors and therapists in training. It is most likely not useful to the lay person, as one would need some baseline understanding of attachment theories and clinical language; however, it does not profess to be for such use. It is a thoughtful and well laid out book, with each section building on the earlier sections. The assessment checklists and skills sheets for treatment provided are a highlight of this book.

The inclusion of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in a chapter separate from the one that exclusively addresses Anxiety Disorders was confusing. A clearer statement that justifies this division would be helpful. My one major critique is that the sources used to support this writing are generally more dated than one would expect, with a large percentage being over 10 years old. It would be interesting to learn about more recent literature, especially in the areas of neurobiology and developmental psychology, which could contribute to a more contemporary understanding of the issue. For example, there has been a fair amount of research that encourages us to consider the importance of the client-clinician relationship both as a mirror for what occurs in the clients' world and as an incubator for being fully seen and heard (the foundation of healthy attachment). In addition, the clinical relationship provides an opportunity for the client to practice mindfulness, not just as a skill to quiet the mind and/or body, but also to become more fully aware of their own internal experience as a foundation for making change. Both of these areas have been addressed in some of the neuroscience and developmental literature within the past five years.

About the Author

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