

BOOK REVIEW

Book review: *Developing Resilience: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach*

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Title: Developing Resilience: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach

Author: Michael Neenan

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The key aims of this book are to share insights, perspectives and observations about the topic of resilience and our human responses to adversity. The reader is also offered a range of evidence-based explanations about how the cognitive behavioural approach can be applied to support clients develop resilience when tackling adversity and difficulties. The premise of this book is not to offer a self-help guide, rather the intention of the narrative is to provide an educative account that encourages the reader to reflect upon their own knowledge and understanding on how people develop and/or maintain resilient attitudes and behaviours.

Already an important contributor on this subject the author, Michael Neenan, is a

leading expert in the field of Resilience as well as in the application of the cognitive behavioural approach in therapy, counselling and coaching. In the first sentence of the Preface he asks the question ‘Why is it that one person can withstand multiple crises while another crumbles in the face of the slightest misfortune?’ (p.ix). This line of enquiry sets the scene for a key theme that underpins the continuing dialogue of the book that also helps to convincingly thread together the different chapters, offering a cohesive and logical examination of the topic.

Divided into 10 chapters, the book initially aims to define resilience and highlight the important contribution that attitude can play as people negotiate challenge and adversity. Focusing next on ways to improve resilience,

including working with strengths. The settings of resilience in the workplace, in relationships and in dealing with difficult people are then covered in the second half of the book. Finally, the discussion is brought to a close by highlighting the importance of maintaining resilience and the strands of the book are drawn together with a final overview of the topic as a closing chapter.

It does not appear to be the case that an objective of this book is to provide a cognitive behavioural toolkit for use in counselling (or coaching) practice when working with people to enhance resilience. However, in places a more specific explanation of the models, strategies and techniques used would add an additional ingredient that might arguably further illustrate the cognitive behavioural approach 'in action'. Whilst we are introduced to the 'Learning Diary' (p. 166), this stands alone as a figure-based example of a framework in the book. Therefore, a more structured approach to the 'tools' that are available when working in this context could perhaps be offered to better equip the interested practitioner to take the ideas presented forward and apply them within their own work supporting people cope more effectively with challenging times.

Having said that, the book has achieved exactly what it set out to do and will potentially be of interest to anyone keen to learn more about the topic of resilience. If you are interested in finding ways to enhance your knowledge on the topic of resilience, this is definitely a key resource to add to the bookshelf or your e-library. ■

Biography

Dr Siobhain O'Riordan PhD is a chartered psychologist and chartered scientist. She is a Fellow of the International Society for Coaching Psychology and member and Trustee of The International Stress Management Association (UK). Siobhain is also a trainer and course co-director on the stress management and coaching programmes at the Centre for Stress Management.



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