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Book list and Book Reviews

Abuse

Breaking Free: Help for Survivors Of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Carolyn ainscough & Kay Toon (Sheldon Press)

(Shelfmark: HQ72.G7 Air)

I would have some reservations about prescribing this – or any other book dealing with sexual abuse - for someone **unless they are in counselling or have some other kind of good support in their lives.**

This book takes the reader step by step through the processes involved in becoming aware of, acknowledging and allowing yourself to heal from childhood sexual abuse. Part information and exercises, part encouragement and support, part others' experiences this is a detailed and in depth book. Each step on the journey of healing is divided into sections, it is a book that can be dipped into. It has a separate 'work book' that can be used on its own or in conjunction with this text. This book benefits from specifically including men/boys as part of the population of abuse survivors.

Overcoming Childhood Trauma

Helen Kennerley (Constable & Robinson)(Shelfmark: RC569.5.C55 Ken)

It would be easy to have doubts about whether it is possible to address some of the problems of childhood trauma through a self help manual. However this book is written by an experienced clinician and her clear understanding of the issues and advice reassure.

The book sets out to help survivors of abuse 'gain control over the sorts of problems which are common amongst survivors' and helps you to develop the skills needed for recovery. The book is divided into three sections; understanding childhood trauma, preparing for change and working through key issues and covers emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The approach is cognitive behavioural. The books explores common problems that may be associated with childhood trauma such as eating problems, self harm, increased vulnerability, traumatic memories or a feeling of "spacing out" at times. It aims to help you stop blaming yourself and see that your problems are understandable. There are clear diagrams, exercises and diary sheets to use where you monitor your day to day distress by looking at your thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and circumstances.

The book states early on that someone reading this book will have to wait until the time is right for them to use it. The counselling service would fully support this, and add that **this book might best be used in tandem with counselling.**

Anger

Overcoming Anger and Irritability

William Davies (Robinson)(Shelfmark: BF575.A5 Dav)

This self-help book takes a Cognitive Behavioural approach to exploring the causes and effects of anger and irritability. The first half of the book focuses on helping identify triggers for angry behaviour and tries to point out the distinction between anger and irritability and when it is appropriate and inappropriate to express these emotions. The second half provides a range of useful, practical exercises to try and find a solution to the problem of controlling anger ranging from diary-keeping to identifying possible dietary contributory factors. There is a valuable concluding section which uses case studies to enable you to test what you have learnt from the book.

Managing Anger,

Gael Lindenfield (Harper Collins)(Shelfmark: BF575.A5 Lin)

In this book subdivided into 4 parts and to be read sequentially, Lindenfield charts anger, one's own and other people's, from stimulus to response and proposes a model for managing anger, which she calls 'Assertive anger'. The book is packed with information, quotes, mnemonics and exercises to help you find out how you express (or don't express) your anger. She highlights that anger is a complex issue, not just about 'losing it' but also about lacking assertiveness, being excessively nice etc as a way of repressing anger. The chapter on the appropriate expression of anger is particularly informative and useful. There are useful connections made between anger and depression, addictions and obsessions.

As a manual, it is a good starting point from which to explore our responses and our responsibilities. The 'management' suggested in the book is fairly mechanistic but will help the reader to think through their own and others anger and gives tips for how to help them.

Anxiety and Stress

Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway

Susan Jeffers (Vermillion)

This famous and influential self help book is now in its 20th year. The title says it all really, the main thesis being that everyone feels fear about moving forward. Jeffers states what she calls truths about fear: that it will never go away; that the only way to get rid of the fear is by doing something despite its unfamiliarity and that pushing through is better than feeling helpless.

The author exhorts us to expand our comfort zones by taking risks and to do something everyday which feels a risk. This helps us avoid being a victim and take responsibility.

The central thesis is spot on and Jeffers explores this thoroughly. Once you have grasped this you can dip into chapters which look relevant to you such as decision making, looking at spirituality etc. It can feel a bit dated and very American with chapters entitled Pollyanna rides again but if you can say you have a fear of public speaking, asserting yourself, being alone etc this book might be a good starting off place.

Overcoming Anxiety.

Helen Kennerley.(Constable & Robinson). (Shelfmark: RC531 Ken)

This is a very readable self help book with helpful summaries throughout. It helps the reader develop a better understanding of problem worries, fears and anxieties and then it teaches some basic coping skills.

Part One explains the origins and development of problem worries, fears and anxieties, while Part Two is a practical step-by-step guide to overcoming these problems. The focus is on the individual with an emphasis on matching the coping strategy to the individual's problem. In doing this it feels more personal and relevant. It recognises the difficulties in implementing techniques to manage anxieties and this makes it supportive.

Part Two is based on a self –help programme which has been developed in clinics and doctors' surgeries over the last ten years, using the comments of clients to adjust and improve it.

Mind Over Mood

Greenberger and Padesky (Guildford Press)

(Shelfmark: WM425.5.C6 Pad)

Don't be put off by the large size of the book as it is not as big as it looks and is well laid out. It focuses particularly on depression, anxiety, anger guilt and shame.

This book uses cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to help you look at your life situation, physical reactions, moods, behaviours and thoughts. The CBT approach is easy to understand and works by changing how you feel through changing the way you think. Once a mood is present, your thoughts automatically support it eg if you feel depressed you think about how unfortunate life is. The worksheets help you work out your automatic thoughts by looking at the situation, rating your mood, catching your automatic thoughts and the evidence you find to support them. The second half of the book helps you look more at the source of these thoughts which come from your core beliefs e.g. I am worthless, I am inadequate. This book will help you step back and observe yourself. However you may need to use this book over a period of time, be selective or use it as part of the counselling process.

Overcoming Social Anxiety & Shyness

Gillian Butler (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC552.S62 But)

This is a comprehensive text covering the theory of anxiety and shyness and laying out a programme to manage and change your position in these areas. The book is aimed at those of us who feel embarrassed and shy when meeting new people and lack confidence when they are with other people.

The author bases this programme on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy, learning to challenge your thoughts and actions and developing new patterns of behaviour. The book includes case studies and different techniques to try out. This way of working can be useful for some people in managing anxieties however, it does not suit everyone. The programme is sequential and builds upon itself and thus lends itself to the formulation of a personal programme

Bereavement

How To Go On Living When Someone you Love Dies.

Therese A. Rando, Ph.D. (Bantam) (Shelfmark: BF575.G7 Ran)

This book is a comprehensive look at grief and how we deal with it. It becomes clear early on that so many different factors influence the way each individual experiences and deals with grief. The cause of death, relationship to the person, and other external factors are looked at. Ways to access help and support are also discussed. This book is easy to read, and the chapters are set out in a way that enables you to dip in and out of the book.

A Special Scar: The experiences of people bereaved by suicide

Alison Wertheimer (Routledge) (Shelfmark: HV6548.G7 Wer)

This is an excellent book useful to both those bereaved by suicide and those – professional or otherwise -who are caring for or supporting them. It is divided into three distinct sections; the first gives an overview of suicide including research in this area; the third section is specifically directed at counsellors/those working with the bereaved or ‘survivors’ as Wertheimer calls them. The most powerful and longest section is Part two – which covers all aspects of the aftermath of suicide and includes the experiences of the 50 people interviewed by the author. It is a mixture of research and suggestions, and moving quotes from the survivors themselves; it gives a detailed picture of the many different experiences and feelings that survivors may encounter. Wertheimer writes as a professional counsellor/researcher/writer who is also a survivor of her sister’s suicide and the book carries an extra ‘punch’ because of this.

It is not strictly speaking a conventional ‘how to’ book but a text which has much to offer to both survivors looking to find some way of coming to terms with their experiences, to the professionals who deal with them and indeed to

anyone who wishes to know more about this often taboo and stigmatised subject.

Claustrophobia

Claustrophobia Andrea Perry (Worth Publishing) (

This book is written by an experienced therapist who suffered from claustrophobia herself in a way which impeded her life. She talks about her own problem and introduces you to the subject in a very careful supportive way recognising that even reading about situations can cause huge anxiety.

Although the book looks quite long, 70 pages are devoted to a comprehensive list of self help strategies where you can choose what might help you most. These strategies are suitable to help manage any anxiety not just claustrophobia.

The first part of the book looks at the experience and causes of claustrophobia. The author normalises the symptoms and that fear is healthy while making it clear that you can miss out on jobs and travelling, that you can feel stupid and ashamed for having it. However she helps you challenge the thought of 'I feel frightened, so it must be dangerous'.

Part 2 looks at how that in modern life we are in more in confined spaces compared to the past. You have to look at the phobic response versus valid anxiety. The author introduces alternative strategies to try rather than avoidance. These are very helpful and listed in great detail. Specific situations are looked at e.g. lifts along with a plan of how to manage them. A book that should help you 'find your way out'.

Confidence Building

Helping Adolescents and Adults to Build Self-Esteem Deborah Plummer (Jessica Kingsley) (Shelfmark: BF724.3.S36 Plu)

The clue to this book is in the subtitle: "A Photocopyable Resource Book". It is an excellent book for those who are leading workshops or groups aimed at helping build self-esteem. It has three parts. Part 1 includes discussions on self-esteem and the process of change as well as guidance on working with groups. Part 2 includes outlines for self-esteem activities that could form the basis of group sessions, and Part 3 the activity sheets for use and copying. A young adult may gain something from reading this book, but it is written from the perspective and for the use of a group/workshop leader/facilitator

Depression

Overcoming Depression

Paul Gilbert. (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC537 Gil)

This is a clear wise and humane approach to dealing with depression. The approach used is that of cognitive behavioural therapy, but the book is jargon free and very accessible.

The book is divided into three parts; understanding depression, which includes how stress, early life experiences as well as evolution have contributed to why we experience depression. Secondly, learning how to cope with depression, which includes how to recognise and challenge your negative thoughts and feelings, styles of negative thinking and issues like self bullying. Finally, part three looks at special problems associated with depression and has some very useful chapters on shame, guilt, anger and perfectionism. At the end of each chapter there is a box with key points and relevant exercises to try out. Throughout the book there are many case studies, which add to our understanding of depression.

One of the main reasons for recommending this book so highly is because of its dual emphasis throughout on both a compassionate as well as a rational approach to challenging depressed thinking. The approach in this book stresses the importance of treating yourself in an encouraging self accepting way, rather than in a bullying self critical manner, which can so often occur with depression.

Overcoming Depression - 3rd Edition

This revised and expanded version is considerably larger than the previous edition, although this should not deter you and includes additional chapters on self compassion as well as on developing a mindfulness approach - (a non judgemental focusing on the present moment)- as well as suggestions for meditation and calming breathing.

If you have a choice I would say that this is the edition to recommend as it is so much broader in its approach. Themes which were touched on in the first two editions are given the space to develop. For example there is a new section on developing a supportive, nurturing relationship with yourself. There are key points and exercises for readers to try linked to each chapter and the emphasis is very much on personal growth and development. This edition reflects the author's widening view as to how to approach depression and is much more than a CBT book. It is definitely added value plus!

Dealing with depression

Dr Caroline Shreeve (Piatkus) (Shelfmark: RC537 Shr)

This is an ideal self-help manual for anyone who thinks they might be depressed and for those around them. It explains what depression is, how to recognise the symptoms and explains the most effective ways to overcome depression, from antidepressants to counselling to complimentary therapies, exploring the pros and cons of each. This book is packed with information, exercises and practical suggestions.

I Had A Black Dog

Matthew Johnstone (Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC537 Joh)

This book is written and beautifully illustrated by Matthew Johnstone and it succinctly addresses the issue of living with depression. It is in the style of a children's book with humorous illustrations and yet it manages to explore the darker feelings of depression with sensitivity. It explores the writer's personal struggle with depression and how he found ways to understand and accept it and find strategies to combat the negativity it brought with it. Well worth a read and ideal for those with a busy timetable who do not want to plough through another long book.

Depression – The Way out of Your Prison

Dorothy Rowe (Brunner Routledge) (Shelfmark: RC537 Row)

Dorothy Rowe is a world-renowned clinical physician who has written a number of self-help books.

In this book Dorothy Rowe explains that depression is not an illness but a coping strategy to defend ourselves from pain and fear when we realise that our life isn't the way we thought it was. Our self-held beliefs and interpretations of events leave their mark and a consequence of that is depression. Once we understand this we can choose to change our perceptions and reality and "then our world comes to us fresh each day, full of abundant life and endless charm."

This is an encouraging, thought-provoking book but you need time and space to read it. It's not the kind of book you can dip in and out of. Most of the cases referred to in the book are older people so this book may be of greater benefit to the more mature student!

Eating Disorders

Getting Better Bite by Bite

Ulrike Schmidt and Janet Treasure (Psychology Press)

(Shelfmark: RC552.B84 Sch)

This is an excellent introduction to bulimia and binge eating disorders. The aim of the book is to help people to improve how they manage their symptoms and to allow them to gain some control over their lives.

The book is full of short case histories which allow you to understand how this condition affects other people. There are constructive suggestions such as keeping a diary to help recognise the triggers for your eating disorder, how these affect your behaviour, and the emotional and physical consequences for you. Bite by Bite has chapters focusing on psychological and emotional issues such as: relationships with family and friends, the need to control, perfectionism and pleasing other people, which can all affect your mood and your bulimia. The book also provides medical and biological information, in a straightforward way, about how bulimia affects your body and your weight.

Most importantly, it helps with how to cope when you have set backs and lapses in your recovery, which the authors see as very understandable, and something to plan for.

Overcoming Anorexia Nervosa A self help guide using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques”

Freeman & Cooper (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC552.A5 Fre)

Essentially this book does what it says on the label: it is a guide to Anorexia Nervosa and a self help manual to help the sufferer overcome the problem. It has been written by someone with many years experience working with eating disorders. The clarity with which its aims are stated is matched by the way the book is set out. It is divided into two main sections: Part 1 gives a simple and usefully detailed and clear summary of everything that is currently known about the subject. This is a section that would be useful to anyone with an interest be they a sufferer, a carer or a professional, and it contains for example information about the effects of AN as well as chapters covering less well known facts about the disease. Part two is the self help manual and comes with a selection of charts, questionnaires, diaries, etc. It is rather helpfully divided into steps rather than chapters and each ‘step’ concludes with a short summary and ongoing homework assignments. The language used is helpful and encouraging allowing for the likelihood of difficulties along the way. At the end is a useful – if limited – section containing references to further reading (although most of these seem to come from the ‘Overcoming’ series) and to organisations that might be helpful.

**Bulimia Nervosa & Binge Eating,
Peter Cooper (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC552.B84 Co)**

This book based on cognitive behavioural techniques is in two parts. The first explains what bulimia and binge eating are, the impact on people's lives, the relationship with food and eating, concern about body size and weight and connection with negative mood states. It explores how it affects your life when the total focus can be on food at times and how this creates depression and anxiety as well as impacting on your social life. The author talks about physical symptoms, secrecy and the vicious circle.

The second half is the self help manual. Here the author picks out who this book can help and who it is unlikely to be helped by this. He suggests that those it can help might also benefit from other interventions as well such as counselling. The self help is based on a six step model starting with monitoring your eating, instituting a meal plan, learning to intervene to prevent binge eating, problem solving eliminating dieting and changing your mind.

There is a recognition of how hard it is to change things, the need for support and how to plan for things going wrong.

Panic Attacks

**Panic Attacks
Christine Ingram (HarperCollins) (Shelfmark: RC531 Ing)**

This easy to read book promises to bring your panic attacks to an end. This seems a big ask but the author suffered from them too in the past. The book covers the symptoms of an attack, why they happen and the impact they can have on your life. The book gives reassurance, a sense of shared experience-you are not alone-and that they can go away. The author shares her own terrible feelings of terror and fear of dying while having an attack and there is a useful diagram showing the cycle of an attack. The second section of the book concentrates on useful ways to take control, to feel empowered and how to take responsibility for your attacks. The third section makes suggestions of what to do when you have an attack and also gives guidance for friends and partners on how they can help.

Perfectionism

Never Good Enough– How to use Perfectionism to your advantage without letting it ruin your life.

**Monica Ramirez Basco (Simon & Schuster)
(Shelfmark: BF698.35.P47 Bas)**

This is a very readable book offering clear examples and analogies to support the reader in understanding how perfectionism operates in their life. Links between perfectionism and stress, anxiety, depression, self doubt, low self esteem and fear of rejection are identified and explored. The reader is helped to identify when perfectionism is helpful and when it becomes problematic. There are step by step instructions and exercises for developing this understanding towards being able to control the feelings of distress associated with perfectionism and learning what it means to be 'good enough'.

When Perfect Isn't Good Enough

**Martin Anthony, and Richard Swinson(New Harbinger Pubs)
(Shelfmark: BF698.35.P47 Ant)**

This is a very comprehensive and detailed approach to perfectionism. The authors define perfectionism as “a tendency to have standards and expectations which are unrealistically high and impossible to meet”, along with an inability to accept mistakes. The book aims at allowing people to have realistic standards, healthy striving, as opposed to impossible perfectionist beliefs.

This book takes very seriously the impact of perfectionism on your life, work and relationships and how the impossible demands that you place on yourself can affect your mood and behaviour and may contribute among other things to feelings of anxiety, depression, anger and procrastination.

The book is divided into three sections, Understanding Perfectionism, Overcoming Perfectionism and working with Specific Problems. This could allow you to dip in to the section, most relevant to you. Each chapter has exercises for you to work on a specific issue. If you are someone who likes an organised approach this book would suit you.

Postgraduate studies

How to get a PhD, handbook for students and their supervisors.

E Phillips and D Pugh (Open University) (Shelfmark: LB2386 Phi)

This is an excellent and comprehensive book which covers both practical and emotional aspects of doing a PhD. It gives advice on choosing and starting a PhD, how to do the research and general guidance for writing up. There is a good chapter which outlines the different emotional phases experienced during a PhD such as the initial enthusiasm, and later feelings of isolation,

boredom etc. The chapter on supervision gives great advice on how to manage your supervisor, how much is your responsibility and how to communicate better with them. Other chapters cover how NOT to get your PhD and how to survive in the culture of a British white male heterosexual environment.

Your PhD Companion

S Marshall and N. Green. (How to books) (Shelfmark: LB2371 Mar)

A quick and easy read with a light-hearted approach. It helps you to think things through before embarking on a PhD. The layout is clear and it has some handy tips and lists of advice. For instance it has a list of 10 questions that you should ask a prospective supervisor. A list of Top Tips on doing a PhD at the end sums up both the book's content but also makes you think about what you are taking on or have taken on

Procrastination

Isn't it about time: How to stop putting things off and get on with your life.

Andrea Perry (Worth Publishing) (Shelfmark: BF637.T5 Per)

This very useful book uses a very accessible model called the 'action spiral'. The author makes it clear that people are not procrastinators just that they can sometimes procrastinate. She uses the action spiral to explain the stages which we have to go through to start and complete anything. The stages are becoming aware, exploring and experimenting, choosing and getting involved, completing and resting and recovering. The book allows you to find out at which stage you put things off, gives you some developmental theory as to why this is and most importantly how you can move forward from there. Anyone who has done our procrastination workshop will know that we use the action spiral very helpfully and that students readily understand that they are not totally stuck, just usually at one stage. The book is very useful, non judgmental and may just help you to complete that piece of work on time.

Beating the Comfort Trap

**Windy Dryden and Jack Gordon (Sheldon Press)
(Shelfmark: BF637.S4 Dry)**

The Comfort trap: what it is, how we fall into it, how to avoid it and how to escape it and stay out of it. In this book the writers describe the Comfort Trap as refusing to tolerate frustration in life because it is uncomfortable – going for the pleasure of the moment or instant gratification without due regard for the long term consequences, or refusing to tolerate some degree of discomfort in the present in order to avoid greater discomfort in the future. The book presents a rational approach to getting along with yourself, with others and with your life. It gives practical ideas and techniques to help create: a healthy tolerance of frustration, to develop self-acceptance, and an acceptance of uncertainty. It looks at healthy risk-taking, flexibility, commitment to creative

pursuits, having long term goals, taking responsibility for oneself, and to having a realistic attitude to life.

Chapters cover issues on anxiety, moderate depression, anger, guilt, procrastination, and the “quick fixes” for example, shopping, gambling, comfort eating, alcohol.

This would be a helpful start for students facing problems with motivation, procrastination, unrealistic expectations of themselves, and self-esteem.

Relating.

Loving Yourself Loving Another Julia Cole (Vermillion)

This very readable book explores the interplay of self-esteem in relationships. It offers advice, self-awareness quizzes and practical exercises to help you improve your emotional well-being. It covers what makes you choose a particular partner, how different relationships work, and how to build strong couple esteem.

Relating Skills Richard Nelson-Jones (Cassell) (Shelfmark: HM132 Nel)

This a very intensive workbook based on the premise that relating is a skill that can be learned. The author analyses and explores all aspects of a wide range of relationships both personal and professional. He then follows this up with exercises to enable you to self-assess your current situation and develop new relationship skills. These cover from how to manage shyness; develop assertiveness skills; manage anger; develop intimacy and a range of other relationship situations. It is a book that promotes the positive message that it is possible to learn new skills in a practical way that can have a major impact on relationships in your life.

However, a caveat should be added that relating is a complex area and that some people can find the attainment and management of relationships difficult for reasons which may require a more in depth understanding and personalised treatment than provided here.

The Right to Speak Patsy Rodenburg (Methuen)

We usually don't think about our voice until 'it lets us down'. In part one of this book, Patsy Rodenburg seeks to help you understand some of the habits and blocks you develop over your lifetime which can get in the way of speaking and expressing yourself freely, out loud.

In part two she offers a comprehensive range of exercises for developing and supporting your voice so that you can feel more confident when speaking.

Rodenburg's explanations are clear and explicit. You gain the understanding that your voice is not a separate entity but relates to all aspects of your being. This book is for anyone who would like to be more confident in how they produce their voice.

Self-Esteem & Assertiveness.

Self Esteem-

McKay and Fanning (New Harbinger Pubs)
(Shelfmark: BM697.5.S46 Mack)

Good self esteem is so fundamental to getting on well in life that reading this book will be helpful to many. The counselling service has used it for years as the basis to workshops and individual therapy. It introduces the concept of the "pathological critic" a term used to describe the negative inner voice that attacks and judges you. This is a useful model of understanding your automatic negative thoughts, why you listen to them and how to begin disarming the "pathological critic".

There are lots of interesting exercises and questionnaires with chapters on compassion, handling mistakes, responding to criticism, using visualisation etc. The book is very comprehensive, packed and well thought through with sophisticated ways of understanding yourself.

Change for the Better

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick (Sage)

This book has a subtle and sophisticated approach to self help mostly based on cognitive analytical therapy. It helps you look at your own patterns and identify between feelings and emotions using questionnaires and exercises. For instance the author asks you to gather information about yourself and your beginnings in life looking at everything from mealtimes to religion from school to money to losses. She has a chapter about writing our life story and gives examples. She examines how these beginnings can contribute beliefs about ourselves and how they can lead to anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties and other problems.

The last 3 parts of the book are dedicated to making changes and offer lots of different approaches to suit everyone. There are lots of practical exercises and useful strategies for change. There are some great insights in this book threaded through with creative ways to help you through. It takes time to read it and do the exercises but the book has subtlety and depth which sets it above the usual 'just do it' self help approach

Overcoming Low Self-Esteem

Melanie Fennell (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: BF697.5.S46 Fen)

The author recognises that low self esteem is something that can seriously affect the lives of many people and that there is a wide range of experience from those who occasionally have self doubt in specific situations to people

who constantly experience harsh self criticism and self condemnation. This book uses a straightforward cognitive behavioural approach based on changing unhelpful patterns of thought and behaviour.

The book is divided into three parts – Defining what low self esteem is understanding how it develops, and the final self-help part, overcoming low self esteem. The aim of the book is to allow you to have a more balanced perception of yourself, increase self confidence and self respect and a sense of self acceptance.

The key areas which the book concentrates on are: understanding, identifying and revising your deeply held negative self belief (the bottom line) and the rigid rules developed from early experiences that you may feel you should live by in order to manage your life. Many of these rules will be so automatic that you hardly notice them. The author points out that these harshly held self critical expectations ignore the good and positive aspects of yourself and are biased towards self criticism. There are helpful chapters on combating self criticism, enhancing self acceptance, changing the rules you live by and revising your negative thoughts and self belief. The author concludes by a chapter on planning for the future and for any set backs that you might have. In order to help you consolidate what you have learnt, throughout the book there are a variety of case histories describing very diverse personal situations some of which you may be able to identify with. There are also exercises, summary sheets, a diary, and a 'positives' notebook. If you feel that an organised rational approach would suit you then this book would be very helpful.

Self Esteem

Gael Lindenfield (Harper Collins) (Shelfmark: BF697.5.S46 Lin)

This approach is comprehensive, thoughtful and for the most part easy to read. This book: invites readers to consider self esteem as a changing dynamic with multiple components any of which can be addressed. Chapters 4 and 5 offer strategies for breaking 'bad habits' and keeping yourself safe while working on self esteem ; Useful antecedents for the self help programme which follows. Part three of the book is the actual self help programme – it uses the metaphor of reconditioning a classic car and actually does develop this metaphor meaningfully. The self help programme is accessible, well staged and well explained

Assert Yourself

Gael Lindenfield (Harper Collins) (Shelfmark: BF575.A85 Lin)

This ever popular self-help book provides a clear outline of the ideas and theory around assertiveness training backed up by self-help exercises which can be used by both individuals and self-help groups. The book is simply laid out and very accessible. An invaluable book for those wanting to develop assertiveness skills for use in all areas of life

Self- Harm

Healing The Hurt Within

Jan Sutton (How To Books) (Shelfmark: RC569.5.S45 Sut)

An extremely comprehensive book. Don't be put off by its weight at the end of each chapter is a key point summary this may be all you need, or a starting point to go back to sections that have meaning or interest to you without needing to read the entire book. The contents of each chapter are sectioned off well making this even easier. Each chapter also has a resources and further reading list so you can follow up anything which is of interest or of greatest use to you.

The book looks at self injury from all angles from the reasons for it, to myths and media handling of the subject. There are excellent sections on how you work with your self harm and it covers many different possibilities with regard to working through this issue so that you can find what may work for you. There is also a very useful section for friends and family to help them to understand what to do and more importantly what not to do.

This book would also be useful for academic staff and the helping professions.

This book might be best read in tandem with counselling.

Sexuality

Loving Ourselves – The Gay and Lesbian Self Esteem Book

Kimeron Hardin (Alyson Books)

This is the updated version of the older book The gay & lesbian self esteem book. The new title and subtitle may put some off as it risks looking like the type of self help book which is often derided rather than the old excellent publication, although the only change here is literally a new cover. There are however new sections on transgender issues, gay parenting and an interesting chapter on being gay and aging. These are relevant and useful additions. We lose the section listed below on choosing a counsellor though this can be viewed by any interested student in our department copy.

This is an extremely readable and broad ranging book. It covers the main influences on the development of a gay man & a lesbian woman and the possible effects these influences may have had on their self esteem. The author then covers issues affecting the positive development of the adult when 'coming out' and the challenges of living and maintaining good mental health in the main areas of life, career and relationships.

The book then goes on to suggest ways in which an individual can work on low self esteem. The method suggested here is based on a system called cognitive behavioural therapy. This is a useful system to manage negative

thoughts and behaviours. I would comment that this is one approach to managing negative thoughts and works well for many. However there are other ways of working with low self esteem which may have a better fit if you do not connect with this approach.

The book finishes with a very good chapter on the importance of carefully choosing a therapist. The book is American so I would direct you instead to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy website bacp.co.uk for resources if required.

As a last point this text while being balanced and comprehensive is conservative in its outlook. There are many other voices in the gay & lesbian community who question compliance with a “heterosexual norm”. Thus we recognise other alternative ways of managing life and relationships and do not seek to impress a norm onto our gay and lesbian clients.

Sleep

Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems Colin Espie (Constable & Robinson) (Shelfmark: RC548 Esp)

Colin Espie's insomnia self-help guide is well worth a read . The tone throughout is assured. It is obvious the author has had to deal in the past with 'wound-up' patients who are unable to sleep. Overall he has a good bedside manner. He is pretty honest about what he expects of you and takes you through his programme patiently. This is based on cognitive behavioural therapy. The sections on sleep-research are informative and helpful. He covers the main issues linked to insomnia: for example, there are sections on how to cope with a racing mind and on relaxation techniques. If you're prepared to follow the programme properly you will almost certainly derive some benefit from it, this reviewer definitely has.

Stress

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook M Davis, E Robbins Eshelman and M McKay (New Harbinger Publications) (Shelfmark: RA785 Dav)

This is a comprehensive yet accessible workbook that can help curb stress and cultivate a more peaceful life. The workbook teaches clinically proven stress-management and relaxation techniques. Each technique is presented with concise background information followed by step-by-step exercises. As you practise these techniques you can gain new insight into your personal stress response and learn how to re-establish balance and a sense of well-being in your life. The first two chapters explore sources of stress and explain stress reactions, to help you decide which of the 18 techniques will be most helpful for you. The techniques cover a wide range of approaches from breathing exercises, progressive muscular relaxation, mindfulness and self-hypnosis, to coping skills for anxiety, time management, exercise and

nutrition. It concludes with a helpful chapter on what to do when you are “stuck”. Easy to read, clear instructions and useful explanations.

Teach Yourself Managing Stress

T. Looker and O. Gregson(Hodder Arnold) (Shelfmark: RA785 Loo)

This book is based on *Stresswise*, a stress awareness and management programme which tackles stress from its biological roots. It presents a clear, concise and practical account of what stress really is and how to make a friend of it instead of letting it destroy you. It works from the premise that we can control our responses, and that once we have gained enough self awareness and learned a few stress management skills, we can choose how we wish to meet the challenges we face in our day to day lives. Just another book on stress? No, this book provides an educational self-help programme suitable for anyone wanting to learn about stress and how to deal with it. It takes a holistic approach concentrating on the ‘self’ and our interaction with the environment in which we find ourselves. Part One takes the form of a questionnaire designed to assess the stress in your life and how you behave when you are stressed. Part Two deals with gaining awareness and understanding of the stress concept and Part Three describes how to deal effectively with stress. Using diagrams, cartoons and personal examples the book aims to

- reduce your risk of ill health
- enhance your social relationships
- improve your performance in the things you do
- increase your productivity and creativity

For More information visit:

www.student-counselling.ed.ac.uk or www.lib.ed.ac.uk