

BOOK REVIEW

COGNITIVE THERAPY OF PERSONALITY DISORDERS

2nd Edition by Aaron T. Beck, Arthur Freeman, Denise D. Davis and Associates

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Management of Personality Disorders poses a major challenge to psychiatrists and other mental health professionals managing mental health problems. Personality disorders complicate diagnosis, impair therapeutic relationships and adversely affect compliance and outcomes.

Aaron Beck, considered as inventor of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) initiated Cognitive therapy in depression in 1960's. In the last five decades, Cognitive therapy evolved as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and is now applied to the treatment of almost all clinical syndromes, including Anxiety, Panic disorder, eating disorders, substance abuse and psychosis. Beck and his associates first published Cognitive Therapy of Personality Disorders in 1990 and second edition in 2004.

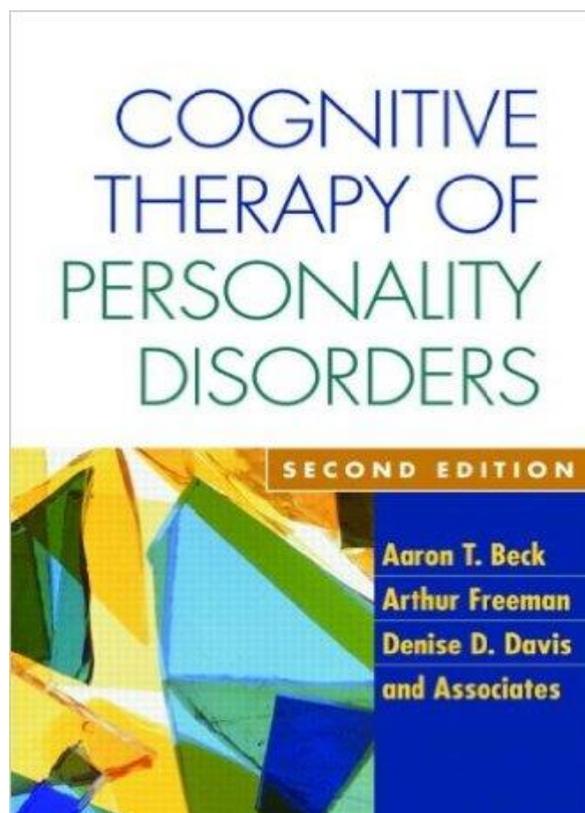
The book is conveniently divided in to 2 parts. Part I has five chapters covering overview, theory of personality disorders, assessment, general principles and techniques of therapy, and relationship with personality disordered patients. These chapters are common to all personality disorders.

Part II has eleven chapters and nine chapters deal with management of individual personality disorders described in DSM IV and one chapter deals with passive aggressive personality disorders. This is convenient for a Cognitive therapist who can focus on a particular personality disorder after completing Part I.

Of particular interest to busy general psychiatrists who wants to improve their understanding personality disordered patients is a chapter on 'Theory of Personality disorders' (Chapter 2). Starting with evolutionary focus, Beck elaborates how genetic factors (Ex: temperaments) interact with environmental responses to help develop and maintain cognitive schemas. A number of case examples are given to illustrate the subjectdeals with passive aggressive personality disorders.

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For quick reference, cognitive profiles of each personality disorder is described in a convenient table form giving details of view of self, view of others, main beliefs and main strategies. For example in Obsessive Compulsive Personality disorder, the view of self is 'Responsible, Competent and Accountable' while the view of others is 'Irresponsible, Casual, Incompetent and Self-indulgent'. The main beliefs are 'I know what is best, Details are crucial, People should do better' and the main strategies are 'Apply rules, Perfectionism, Control, Criticize, Punish'

This book will benefit not only CBT therapists dealing with Personality disordered patients, but also any psychiatrist in understanding and managing them.

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