Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents
by Amie E. Grills-Taquechel and Thomas H. Ollendick.

In the hustle and bustle of the clinical care world, it is sometimes
difficult to find the time to review the basic tenets of psychiatry.
Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents does just
that. Within the context of anxiety and phobic disorders, it reviews
the differential diagnoses, theories, and models of these disorders,
diagnostic methods, and treatment. This volume is a well-
written overview of the topic. One drawback is that DSM-IV-TR
terminology is used instead of DSM-5, but for billing purposes, it
does provide the corresponding ICD-10 codes.

The first chapter provides an overview of phobic and anxiety
disorders as they specifically relate to children. The diagnoses,
epidemiology, differential diagnoses, and comorbidities associated
with these disorders are described. I found this chapter to be an
easy-to-read narrative and a good overall review.

Subsequently, the authors highlight the different theories of
why anxiety disorders develop in children and adolescents. The
book does not claim to be an exhaustive description of all of
the different possibilities but instead provides brief descriptions
of the contributing factors including genetic/biological, child/
developmental characteristics, and environmental and psychosocial
influences. The chapter concludes by bringing all of these factors
together to provide integrated models of anxiety. These models
provide insight into how and why children become phobic or
fearful. They help providers conceptualize the child and assist in
developing effective treatment plans.

To properly treat a child with psychiatric issues, it is critical
to obtain the correct diagnosis. The third chapter highlights
the different tools that are useful in the diagnosis and treatment of
anxiety disorders. One important tool mentioned by the authors
is kids themselves. They state that even young kids can participate
in psychiatric evaluations by answering simple questions about
their emotions. The chapter focuses on the different diagnostic
instruments available, including broad screening measures,
structured and semistructured clinical interviews, observational
and behavioral assessments, and rating scales. Detailed tables with
examples of each type of assessment are provided for each type
of measure. One table lists the scheduled interviews and which
diagnoses they assess. This chapter is thorough enough to help
even a beginner diagnostician choose appropriate diagnostic tools.

Treatment is the focus of the fourth chapter. The author
emphasizes that this section focuses on empirically based treatments.
The beginning of the chapter provides a glossary of terms related
to treatment. I appreciated this glossary as a way to ensure that the
terms mean the same thing to all readers. Treatment modalities
are then divided into psychotherapy and psychopharmacology.
For each modality, its mechanism of action, methodology, and
efficacy are reviewed. The chapter emphasizes combination
treatments and looks at their usefulness over single treatments. The
effectiveness of psychopharmacologic treatments both individually
and in combination with psychotherapy is evaluated. This chapter
evaluates the evidence for each treatment, but it does not include
details of each medicine (side effects, dosing, etc). The chapter
provided an excellent balanced overview of the treatment options.

The book closes with a chapter that combines the didactics of
the earlier chapters into a patient vignette—a nice way to conclude
the book, as it brings clinical relevance to the forefront.

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