

# Book Reviews

EDITED BY MERRYL BUSHANSKY

## Treating Anxious Teens in School

REVIEW BY MARSHA BORDEN

For any practitioner who has struggled with helping adolescents conquer school-based anxiety, *Helping Students Overcome Social Anxiety: Skills for Academic and Social Success* is a clear, comprehensive guide that can be a serious game-changer. The book is organized into four overall sections: Recognizing and Addressing Social Anxiety at School, Promoting Skills for Academic and Social Success (SASS), Supplementary Strategies, and Other Practical and Clinical Considerations. Each chapter includes appendices that are chock full of helpful summaries and outlines, as well as handouts and worksheets that can be downloaded and photocopied for use with students.

Both novice and seasoned school psychologists can find something of value here. One chapter, ideal for beginning school psychologists, is titled, "The Nuts and Bolts of Helping Anxious Students at School: Putting It All Together." It details specific tips for putting groups

together, including obtaining buy-in from parents and students, scheduling meetings, addressing confidentiality and planning for "exposures," and practicing learned skills in the school environment. Veteran practitioners might enjoy refreshers on the psychology of anxiety, including content in the chapters titled "Socially Anxious Thinking 101" and "Realistic Thinking: Give it a Second Thought!"

**HELPING STUDENTS OVERCOME SOCIAL ANXIETY: SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS**

By C. M. Warner, D. Colognori, & C. Lynch  
2018, Guilford

The meat of the book is found in the second section, Part II: Promoting Skills for Academic and Social Success (SASS). It is here that the authors detail therapeutic strategies for addressing social anxiety at school: Students are didactically taught about anxiety through thorough explanations of how emotions, physiological responses, thoughts, and avoidance behaviors work together to maintain anxiety. This instruction is key to empowering students to engage with treatment toward the goal of reducing their anxiety and avoidance. Through graphics, like the CBT triangle (physical/emo-

tional thoughts, feelings, and behaviors) and the Fear Ladder and charts, the book further helps practitioners demystify the construct of anxiety and invite kids into the conversation at the same time. Handouts round out these chapters and provide activities focused on practicing learned skills and concepts, including role-play scenarios, games, and worksheets.

This is a big book. Because it presents as such an in-depth, all-inclusive compendium, it could be off-putting to the busy school psychologist. Some readers may find it helpful to approach the book by first reviewing the descriptions of each chapter found in the Contents section. In approaching the book in this way, specific topics of interest could be pulled out and sampled in bite-sized pieces. Another way to tackle the book is to read a small, ongoing case illustration in Chapters 3-15 called Lauren's Story. This highly engaging narrative provides a fictionalized account of one high school student's difficulties while highlighting the various strategies covered in the book. Overall, the book is highly recommended to anyone who seeks to understand and treat anxious teens at school.

MARSHA BORDEN, NCSP, is a school psychologist in Connecticut.