

simply owing to greater impulsivity (p. 26) or the more violent and efficient methods chosen (p. 99), but also to a prevailing belief that no one will be there to help.

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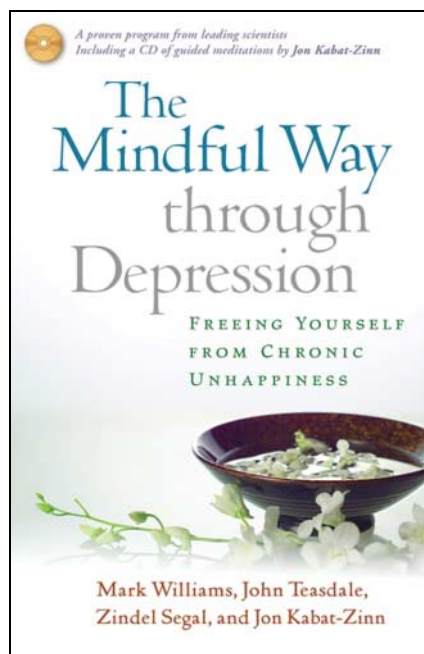
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The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness

By Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal & Jon Kabat-Zinn. Guilford Publications. 2007. 278pp. US \$19.95 (pb). ISBN 9781593851286

Freeing ourselves from unhappiness, or, if we have done that and got the T-shirt,



freeing others from chronic unhappiness sounds like a worthwhile effort. Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), a group skill-training for relapse prevention of depression, has been shown to halve relapse rates in chronic depression in two randomised controlled trials and is endorsed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Williams *et al* have published their eagerly awaited book accompanying the MBCT group programme and explaining their ground-breaking therapy to users and professionals.

Every word in this affordable paperback seems to embody the gentleness and the spirit of openness that one brings to the practice of MBCT. It is therefore an ideal tool for guided self-help. Like learning a new musical instrument, it encourages readers to immerse themselves in various

meditative practices. Via a CD sold with the book, readers are guided by the calming voice of Jon Kabat-Zinn – the man who brought meditation into the medical mainstream and made it accessible to scientific evaluation.

Invaluable for all non-professionals and therapists alike, *The Mindful Way through Depression* takes the reader step by step on a journey of exploration. It gives us a rationale for trying this programme: depressive relapse is mediated by the mind's habit of trying to solve problems that cannot be resolved. By brooding over the past, or worrying about the future, our mind takes us into an internal battle that cannot be won – away from the experience of what is the present moment, into a depressive spiral. This therapy is a way out of the ruminative spiral through a paradoxical intervention: by not trying to change the way we feel we create a space where healing can take place. Skills known from cognitive-behavioural therapy, like behavioural activation and seeing thoughts as thoughts rather than ultimate truths, are elegantly intertwined with meditative techniques.

The book ultimately helps us to make contact with a truly revolutionary concept that seems so alien to our culture and to us as health professionals – deeply felt acceptance of feelings or states that we cannot change. Not convinced? Just get the book, get your bottom on the cushion and read it. Do it in the spirit of this book: 'You do not have to like it, just do it!' You may enjoy it after all.

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