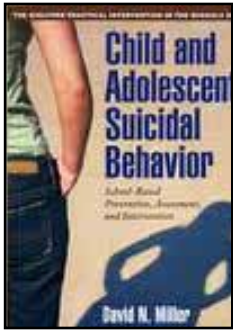


Child and Adolescent Suicidal Behavior: School-Based Prevention, Assessment, and Intervention

David N. Miller. The Guilford Press: New York, NY, 2011. 170 pages. \$29.97, softcover.



As the name implies, this book is primarily directed towards school-based practitioners including psychiatry consultants to schools, school-based nursing staff, mental health workers, teachers and administrators. A significant portion of the book is dedicated to outlining the problem of suicidality in youth with coverage of topics such as prevalence, risk factors, protective factors and the importance of school-based approaches and other components of a comprehensive system for suicide prevention in youth. Prior to discussion of how to design school-based programs for the prevention, assessment and intervention of suicidal behaviour, the author establishes a descriptive foundation of the scope and importance of these behaviours.

Starting with a broad overview of factors associated with suicide, the author discusses some universal suicide prevention programs. Screening programs which attempt to identify at-risk and high-risk students are described. A differentiation of nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) versus suicidal behaviours is made. There is commentary on the link between school shootings and suicidal youth. A spectrum of interventions designed to address the highest risk students are discussed, ranging from concrete interventions, such as limiting access to lethal means, to psychosocial treatments such as mindfulness. The author provides an excellent description of the clear and concise approach to “postvention,” how a school can handle a completed suicide. There are succinct and practical recommendations that can be easily implemented at any school regardless of size or setting.

This is a large amount of material to cover in a book of this size. The brevity with which the above topics are addressed may be perceived as either a strength or a limitation, depending on the background of the individual reader. Each

topic ranges in length from a few sentences to a few pages, and the reader is repeatedly referred to other sources which limits the utility of the book to some degree. Generalizability to non-US settings is limited by the clear emphasis on American demographics and cultural factors, including access to firearms and school liability. Although they may have a strong preventive role, some of the recommendations made are often impossible in settings with limited resources, such as “any youth suspected of possibly being suicidal should be supervised at all times and should never be left alone under any circumstances” (page 40) and “individualized suicide risk assessments should be conducted if there is any reason to even suspect a student might be suicidal or potentially suicidal” (page 85).

Overall the author does an excellent job of covering not only what has evidence of efficacy but also what has been shown to be ineffective or counterproductive. This information will potentially allow schools to create or implement effective, evidence-based programs and review the appropriateness of previously established programs. This book serves as a user-friendly introduction and well-researched reference manual that directs readers to additional resources for a more in-depth understanding. This approach allows this book to be read efficiently by its target audience. This user-friendly approach is also reflected in the book’s design, as it is printed on letter size paper with an easily manipulated binding, enabling the express reproduction of its numerous useful handouts (including one particularly good one addressing common myths about suicide).

Upon a review of this book, the reader gains an understanding of the scope and seriousness of suicidality in youth. The extensive research and reference lists (especially in Appendix 1) are an excellent resource for any mental health professional seeking to learn more about this important topic. Dr. Miller is clearly an experienced clinician who gives his treatment of this subject a more human touch by including several of his own opinions and clinical experiences in the book in addition to the evidence-based underlay. In this way, Dr. Miller refocuses the effects of this tragic reality back where it belongs, on to the suffering youth and the family, friends and professionals who seek to help them.

Sterling Sparshu, MD

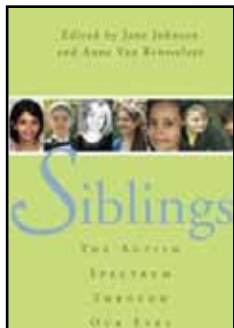
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Siblings: The Autism Spectrum Through Our Eyes

Jane Johnson and Anne Van Rensselaer, eds. Jessica Kingsley: Philadelphia, PA, 2010. 94 pages. \$12.95 (US), softcover.



'Siblings' is a book that I looked forward to reviewing and using in my practice, where I see a high proportion of autism-affected children and young adults along with their families. This book consists of a series of articles written by twenty siblings describing their experiences of living with a family member who has an autism spectrum disorder. It is written for children and young adults in that situation, as well as for parents to read in order to gain their typical children's perspective. The preface explains that "not everybody lives near [a sibling support group] so – this book is for you. – we think you will feel like you have just met someone who knows exactly how you feel..." (page 7). Contributors range, at the time of writing, from nine to 34 years old, with many years of experience between them.

One of the challenges of pulling together such a variety of authors is in finding some consistency and common themes. Otherwise the overall picture is lost in a series of independent and fragmented articles. The opposite seems to have happened here. Individual chapters are written in a very similar, almost formulaic manner that eventually distracts from the meaning, other than one chapter, which is presented as a table. As a result of this, even the chapters that ring true individually are lost in the overall book. Some of the younger children's contributions would be challenging for many of their peers to read and understand. For example a ten year old has contributed the following sentence; "I think autism affects a person's personality, but unlike being psychotic it's more of a medical condition..." (page 10).

Some of the messages that are conveyed are not helpful, one example of this being the statement that a sibling with autism 'cannot control himself' when he hits and kicks, implying that the other children have to learn to deal with this. In addition, opinions about causality are left as if they are scientifically proven, including implications about the causal role of vaccines and the use of dietary interventions, such as a gluten free diet, and prayer in effecting change.

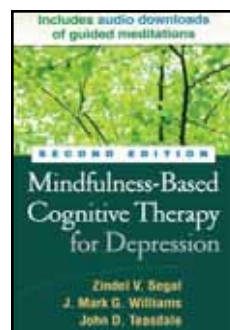
Children do take on the belief system of their parents, but I believe that it is the responsibility of editors to ensure that the book is not misleading to those who read it; this responsibility has been neglected.

There are some chapters that I plan to make available to siblings of the children that I work with, including the contribution from the youngest contributor, which is charming! I would certainly not recommend the entire book, because of the above misgivings.

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Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression, Second Edition

Zindel V. Segal, J. Mark G. Williams & John D. Teasdale. The Guilford Press, New York, NY, 2013. 451 pages, \$55 (US).



Le livre comporte 3 parties, dont la première expose de façon minutieuse la démarche des auteurs à la recherche d'une approche complémentaire à la thérapie cognitive permettant de prévenir les récurrences de la dépression chez les patients adultes en rémission. Les auteurs partagent avec nous l'élaboration théorique de leur modèle visant la prévention de la récurrence de la dépression basée sur l'approche classique de la thérapie cognitive d'Aaron Beck intégrée dans le cadre de la *mindfulness*.

Les auteurs rapportent que leur attrait initial pour la *mindfulness* les a conduits à une simplification de l'approche qui a conduit à des résultats initiaux non concluants. Avec l'approfondissement de leur démarche, les auteurs disent avoir accepté la complexité de l'approche et y avoir adhéré entièrement, rejoignant les prémisses mêmes de la thérapie dialectique comportementale de Marsha Linehan. Les auteurs partagent ainsi avec nous ce processus ayant permis d'aboutir à une intégration optimale et démontrée par la suite efficace, de la *mindfulness* à la thérapie cognitive.

La seconde partie du livre expose chacune des 8 sessions du programme, les moindres détails y sont expliqués, rien n'est laissé au hasard: rencontre initiale avec les participants, discussion des enjeux de confidentialité (risque suicidaire),

aménagement de la salle de thérapie de groupe, narratifs des certaines sessions, etc. Au fur et à mesure que cette partie définit le contenu des sessions, les auteurs prennent le temps de clarifier et de reprendre des aspects théoriques essentiels à la compréhension des éléments de chacune des sessions.

La dernière partie du livre porte sur les études scientifiques sous-jacentes à la confirmation des résultats de l'efficacité de cette approche. Elle comporte une excellente revue de la méthodologie et des résultats des études entreprises par les auteurs (incluant leur étude séminale randomisée et contrôlée). Les études subséquentes dans des populations similaires y sont présentées ainsi qu'une méta-analyse des études actuelles. On y retrouve également des suggestions pour la formation des instructeurs et l'implantation de cette approche dans la clinique auprès des patients.

En fin de première partie, les auteurs invitent les lecteurs à aller lire sur les bases scientifiques de leur approche dans la section se trouvant en fin de livre après la deuxième partie qui présente le programme détaillé de l'approche. Nous encourageons les lecteurs à lire cette section avant même d'entreprendre la lecture de la deuxième partie, car plusieurs des explications sous-tendant les résultats probants permettent de mieux saisir les indications détaillées des populations auprès desquelles cette approche risque de s'avérer efficace, basées sur les études scientifiques relatées soit: les patients adultes ayant fait 3 épisodes de dépression et plus, étant en situation stable sans épisode courant au moment d'entreprendre la thérapie. En effet, les populations de patients n'ayant vécu que deux épisodes dépressifs ou moins ou en pleine crise aigüe, ne semblent pas bénéficier de ce type d'approche. Aussi, tel que rapporté par les auteurs, l'apport de cette approche à une population d'enfants

et d'adolescents est encore à l'étude, mais prometteuse. On note toutefois que les adultes dépressifs ayant débuté leur maladie avant l'âge adulte, soit pendant l'enfance ou l'adolescence, sont probablement la population qui répondra le mieux à ce type d'approche une fois devenus adultes.

Une autre section très intéressante réside dans une série de commentaires provenant des participants à cette thérapie. À nouveau, cela permet par des exemples concrets de mieux saisir l'approche. Enfin, l'apport de matériel audio visant à guider les séances de méditation via l'accès à un site internet en lien avec le livre enrichit cet ouvrage d'actualité et valide scientifiquement.

L'audience ciblée par les auteurs est bien définie, à savoir : les intervenants spécialisés bien formés (accrédités) en psychothérapie, en counselling, et familiers avec l'approche de groupe; les intervenants en santé mentale ayant développé une expérience auprès des patients souffrant de troubles de l'humeur. Les cliniciens et les chercheurs y trouveront certainement leur intérêt. Un point central souligné par les auteurs tout au long du livre consiste en la pratique régulière de la méditation par les intervenants (instructeurs) eux-mêmes pour pouvoir atteindre des résultats optimaux. Tel qu'affirmé par les auteurs, ceci est essentiel dans une approche comme la *mindfulness*, apport de la thérapie dialectique comportementale (d'inspiration bouddhiste). En conclusion, notre appréciation générale de cet ouvrage est excellente à tous points de vue.

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