

Cognitive Analytic Therapy: Distinctive Features (2018)

Book Review By Dr Claire Parker

“Psychotherapy and Counselling Distinctive Features”

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Cognitive Analytic Therapy: Distinctive Features is an essential book for all those with an interest and curiosity regarding cognitive analytic therapy (CAT). The book has been written by three knowledgeable and passionate CAT therapists with extensive experience in the field. The authors provide a succinct and accessible overview of the development of CAT, the theoretical underpinnings and the more practical concepts of the therapy.

The book has been written in a very clear and accessible manner. Organized in two parts; the first concerns theoretical features, while the second focuses on practical features. Each part includes 15 short, focused chapters covering distinctive features of the CAT model. The authors have helpfully structured the book in a way that enables the reader to use the book as a reference tool, dipping in and out of chapters of interest or relevance. Although at times this means there is repetition, ultimately I found this a useful feature that helpfully reinforced ideas and concepts.

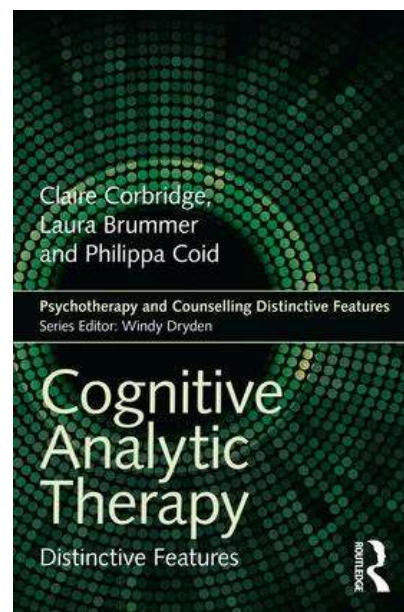
The theoretical section features key elements of the CAT model. The authors guide the reader through the development of CAT and the theoretical basis of the model. Chapters concisely

summarise specific topics explaining some difficult theoretical ideas well. Throughout the book is well-balanced with research, providing numerous references to explore further.

The second part of the book focuses on how the theoretical elements of CAT presented in part 1 are translated into clinical practice. The authors weave between a more content focused approach to one that leads the reader to consider the relationship between the therapist and client. The authors provide helpful examples of reformulation and goodbye letters and diagrammatic examples of target problem procedures including; snags, traps and dilemmas.

The authors helpfully orientate the reader to the CAT approach and the therapeutic style of openness and collaboration. As a trainee clinical psychologist beginning my journey into CAT I have found this book an extremely useful resource that I continue to refer to. As I develop my understanding and relationship with the CAT model different parts of this book have drawn in my attention.

As the book is titled, it provides simply the distinct features of the CAT model in an extremely useful and accessible manner. The book instils curiosity to explore CAT further and offers the opportunity for the student and experienced reader alike to reflect on their relationship with the model and their development and understanding of CAT. In conclusion, I would recommend this book as an



essential read to all those interested in finding out more about the CAT model and as a rich and concise resource for those who are currently using CAT in their clinical practice.

Dr Claire Parker (PhD)

Second Year Trainee in Clinical Psychology, University of Exeter and Langdon Hospital, Secure Services, Dawlish. At Exeter University, teaching in CAT is provided over the three years of the doctoral training. In my second year I have worked under supervision with two clients using CAT therapy. The knowledge contained within this book has helpfully contributed to both my knowledge and skill. I would recommend this book for the novice and experienced clinician, supervisor and trainer alike.