

## SUMMARY OF FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF CONTROL THERAPY

Control Therapy is an approach to psychotherapy and health care that integrates theory, research, and practice. It is based on the premise that one of the central issues facing individuals is how to maintain a healthy sense of control in their lives, and that issues of control (fear of loss of control, desire for control, power struggles) underlie most concerns brought to therapy. Based on twenty-five years of research and clinical work with thousands of individuals, the book is both scholarly (nearly 1000 references) and practical--there are detailed clinical instructions on control-based techniques, and case studies illustrating the principles. The book is targeted to practicing clinicians, as well as for use in graduate student training.

\*Provides an integrative bio-psycho-social theory of human control and self-control (including looking at the neurobiological correlates of control using Positron Emission Tomography) and showing how the concept of control is central to DSM IV disorders, ranging from depression and anxiety to personality and impulse control disorders.

\*Offers a reliable and validated way to assess clients' control profiles, including desire for control (where they want control, why they want it); their current sense of control; the modes by which they seek control; and their use of both self and other in gaining control. Research shows that this means of assessing client control profiles is the most sensitive yet devised to differentiate among clinical disorders, and between clinical and normative populations. Assessment also includes methods for listening to client speech, including the client narrative (their "control story."): issues of control, control beliefs, and assaults to their sense of control

\*Shows how control can be (and is already being) used in other psychotherapeutic approaches: psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, humanistic, couples, and transpersonal, thus providing new insights into the therapeutic process regardless of therapist orientation.

\*Details mainstream Western psychology's implied vision and homeostatic goal for control: that loss of control and learned helplessness is unhealthy, and that gaining control (including an illusion of control) is equated with mental health. Articulates the pluses and limits of that model, and offers a vision of optimal control for mental, physical, and interpersonal health, including self-regulation of cognitions, affect, and behavior.

\*Details specific instructions in control-based techniques with a step by step model for short-term treatment packages of eight to twelve sessions. The model emphasizes how techniques can be "matched" to the client's control profile, thus offering both standardized, replicable techniques, and providing flexibility and sensitivity to each client's individual needs and style.

\*Emphasizes two positive modes of gaining control, both an assertive, change mode of control, and a yielding, accepting mode. The authors draw both from the Western scientific literature in psychology which has emphasized active instrumental control, and the non-Western philosophical and psychological traditions which have emphasized the value of surrendering or letting go of inappropriate active control efforts. Practical instructions in each mode are explained, as well as ways to integrate and achieve balance between the modes.

\*Offers guidelines for dealing with difficulties for clients in the process of gaining control, including resistances, motivation, clarifying goals, and increasing self-efficacy beliefs.

\*Examines the importance of therapists becoming aware of their own control dynamics because of the potential effect those dynamics may have on the therapeutic encounter. Examines matching the therapists' method of teaching to the client's control style.

\*Illustrates through case studies the use of a control-based approach to mental health, physical health, and interpersonal relationship difficulties.

\*Raises larger philosophical questions regarding control, including societal implications of a control-based approach.