



The ABCs of Human Behavior: Behavioral Principles for the Practicing Clinician

By Jonas Ramnerö, Niklas Törneke



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When cognitive behavior therapy emerged in the 1950s, driven by the work of Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck, basic behavior principles were largely sidelined in clinical psychology curricula. Issues in cognition became the focus of case conceptualization and intervention planning for most therapists. But as the new third-wave behavior therapies begin to address weaknesses in the traditional cognitive behavioral models-principally the modest effectiveness of thought stopping and cognitive restructuring techniques-basic behavior principles are once again attracting the interest of front-line clinicians. Many of today's clinicians, though, received their training during the years in which classical behaviorism was not a major part of clinical education. In order to make the best use of the new contextual behaviorism, they need to revisit basic behavioral principles from a practical angle. This book addresses this need.

The *ABCs of Human Behavior* offers practicing clinicians a pithy and practical introduction to the basics of modern behavioral psychology. The book focuses both on the classical principles of learning as well as more recent developments that explain language and cognition in behavioral and contextual terms. These principles are not just discussed in the abstract-rather the book shows how the principles of learning apply in the clinical context. Practical and easy to read, the book walks clinicians through both common sense and clinical examples that help them learn to use behavioral principles to observe, explain, and influence behavior in a therapeutic setting.

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Editorial Review

Review

"It is rare to find a book on behavioral analysis that successfully incorporates theory and clinical utility. The ABCS of Human Behavior does, indeed, succeed. Ramnerö and Törneke provide the reader with a concise description of ideas dating back to Skinner as well as more recent treatments of such complex issues as understanding cognition. This engaging book will provide scholarly and practical information that is a must read for clinicians and students from all theoretical backgrounds."

—Christopher R. Martell, Ph.D., ABPP, clinical associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and psychology at the University of Washington and author of *Depression in Context*

"Along with the explosion of interest in newer psychotherapies such as ACT, behavioral activation, DBT, FAP, and mindfulness/acceptance/meditation based interventions, many clinicians who were not extensively trained in behaviorism want a deeper understanding of the fundamental behavioral processes and theory that underlie these treatments. Up to now, this basic information was buried and dispersed in an array of textbooks, philosophical and theoretical treatises, and an extensive laboratory-based experimental literature. Ramnerö and Törneke have distilled the essentials of this (often) esoteric literature in a clearly written, comprehensive, up-to-date book that frequently illustrates the abstract principles with clinical applications. Operant conditioning, respondent conditioning, exteroceptive conditioning, stimulus control, establishing operation, functional analysis, relational framing, negative versus positive reinforcement, are a just a few examples of the concepts that are demystified, made understandable, and clinically relevant. The book is an ideal basic text for graduate students learning about behavioral psychotherapy (the author's name for the new treatments mentioned above) and will fulfill the needs the experienced clinician who wants a deeper understanding of these therapies."

—Robert J. Kohlenberg, professor of psychology at the University of Washington

"The authors combine advanced discussions about learning theory and behavioral analysis with straightforward and informative examples. The book also discusses the more recent theoretical developments within the fields of human language and cognition. Both beginners and experienced therapists will find much to learn from reading this book."

—Lennart Melin, Ph.D., professor of clinical psychology at Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden

From the Publisher

The ABCs of Human Behavior the first book to present modern behavioral psychology to practicing clinicians. The book focuses both on the classical principles of learning, as well as the more recent developments that help explain language and cognition.

From the Author

Jonas Ramnerö, Ph.D., has worked as a licensed psychologist for 18 years. He earned license as a psychotherapist in 1995. He is currently assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at Stockholm University, where he is responsible for the clinical training in cognitive-behavioral therapies for the students studying to become psychologists or psychotherapists. He earned his Ph.D in 2005 with the thesis Behavioral Treatments of Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia: Treatment Process and Determinants of Change and is author of articles published in international scientific journals. Ramnerö has an extensive clinical experience, mainly of treating people with anxiety and mood disorders, an experience that stems both from general psychiatry and private practice. Since 1998 he has served as a clinical supervisor, both for students and trained psychologists, and acquired a great deal of experience as a lecturer. He is also currently a member of the board of the Swedish Association for Behavior Therapy.

Niklas Törneke, MD, is a psychiatrist and has worked as a senior psychiatrist in the department of general psychiatry in his hometown Kalmar (in the southeast of Sweden) from 1991 until he started private practice 1998. He earned license as a psychotherapist in 1996 and was originally trained as a cognitive therapist. Since 1998 he has worked mainly with acceptance and commitment therapy, both in his own practice and as a teacher and clinical supervisor. His clinical experience ranges from psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia to common anxiety and mood disorders with high prevalence in the general population.

Users Review

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Jesse Harrison:

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