Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents

Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent mental health problems in childhood. In this timely book, an international team of psychiatrists and psychologists review the most recent theoretical and empirical developments in the field and indicate how these may inform research and clinical practice.

Following a historical introduction, chapters review conceptual and management issues, including cognitive, neurobiological, learning and developmental processes, and the influence of the peer group and family. Phenomenology, classification and assessment are covered, as are clinical course, intervention and outcome, with attention to both pharmacological and psychosocial treatment approaches.

For clinicians and researchers this is an authoritative guide to the understanding and assessment of anxiety disorders in the young, and will appeal to all mental health professionals involved with this age group.

Wendy K. Silverman is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Child and Family Psychosocial Research Center at Florida International University, Miami.

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Child and adolescent psychiatry is an important and growing area of clinical psychiatry. The last decade has seen a rapid expansion of scientific knowledge in this field and has provided a new understanding of the underlying pathology of mental disorders in these age groups. This series is aimed at practitioners and researchers both in child and adolescent mental health services and developmental and clinical neuroscience. Focusing on psychopathology, it highlights those topics where the growth of knowledge has had the greatest impact on clinical practice and on the treatment and understanding of mental illness. Individual volumes benefit both from the international expertise of their contributors and a coherence generated through a uniform style and structure for the series. Each volume provides firstly an historical overview and a clear descriptive account of the psychopathology of a specific disorder or group of related disorders. These features then form the basis for a thorough critical review of the etiology, natural history, management, prevention and impact on later adult adjustment. Whilst each volume is therefore complete in its own right, volumes also relate to each other to create a flexible and collectable series that should appeal to students as well as experienced scientists and practitioners.
Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents
Research, assessment and intervention

Edited by
Wendy K. Silverman
and
Philip D. A. Treffers
To Effie,
WKS
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Preface

The production of this volume was prompted by the international research conference on anxiety disorders in children and adolescents, held in Leiden, The Netherlands, May 15 and May 16, 1997, under the auspices of Curium, Academic Centre of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Leiden University, the Section of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Netherlands Psychiatric Association, and the Netherlands Institute for Postgraduate Studies. With the exception of chapters 1, 5, 11, and 15, the chapters in this volume began as papers presented at the conference. Each of these however has been extensively revised or fully rewritten, partly in response to feedback from the editors. The other chapters were specially invited contributions (except for chapter 1 which was written by the editors) intended to balance the thematic organization of the book.

As the programme committee for the conference and the editors of this volume, it was a privilege for us to work with such a distinguished group of scholars. In our view, each contributor successfully met the challenge of analysing and synthesizing the particular literature relevant to their chapter. As a consequence, each chapter represents an excellent treatise of a topical area. As a corpus of work, the volume thus provides for a thorough and complete summary of current issues and perspectives about anxiety disorders in children, and therefore advances our understanding about anxious children.

We believe it is important and useful to have a volume that provides this type of integrative summary of the various literatures relevant to anxiety and its disorders in children and adolescents because these literatures have grown considerably in recent years. Because of this growth, it has become increasingly difficult to keep up with the knowledge base. To move forward even more in knowledge development, however, we believe it is important to bring the various literatures together in a systematic way. Hence, a main goal of this volume is to bring together the various literatures most pertinent to anxiety
and its disorders in children in order to build upon the current knowledge base in this area. This goal is accomplished by having each chapter cover a particular area (e.g. classification and assessment, psychopharmacology, cognition, peer influences) and present a consolidated and integrative picture of this area.

Because of the breadth of the topic areas covered and the scholarly manner in which each is handled by the contributors, the volume is likely to appeal to advanced students in psychology and psychiatry, as well as researchers and practitioners who are interested in learning more about anxiety and its disorders in children, from a variety of perspectives. The chapters contained herein also will hopefully set the stage for improved clinical research and practice with anxious children and their families for the future.

This book was the product of the efforts of many people. As we have noted, we are particularly appreciative of the chapter authors for each of their fine contributions. They accepted our suggestions for revisions willingly and were prompt (usually!) in providing us with final drafts. We appreciate, as well, their patience as the process proceeded from conference to book. We were aided in this volume by the staff of Cambridge University Press, particularly Jocelyn Foster who initiated the project with us and Pauline Graham who completed the project. We also appreciate the thoughtful comments that Dr Ian Goodyer, editor of the Cambridge Monographs in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, gave us on our initial outline which helped to shape the final version of the text that you are now reading. Perhaps even more importantly, we appreciate his giving us the ‘green light’ to proceed with this project.

Finally, Wendy Silverman would like to thank her students at Florida International University in Miami for their willingness and eagerness to assist her with all her various endeavours, including this book. Armando A. Pina particularly deserves thanks for managing many of the administrative details involved in putting together a text of this sort. She also is grateful to Leiden University for her appointment in 1997 as a visiting professor of medicine. In addition, Wendy would like to thank, as always, her husband, Efraim Ben-Zadok, and her two children, Daniel and Rachel. For this project, they provided not just their usual emotional support, but physical support as well – they spent 1997 in Leiden with her while she was working on both the conference and the conceptual planning of this book with Philip.

Philip Treffers would like to thank Paul Engelen, the manager of the research conference in 1997, and Jerry O’Connor who was of great help with the translation of an initial version of the first chapter. He also is grateful to Leiden University for the appointment in 1997 of Wendy Silverman as a visiting...
professor. This resulted in collaboration on not just this volume, but on other childhood anxiety research projects. Philip’s thanks to his wife, Ietje, and children, Milena, Hedda and Jakob, go without saying.

Wendy K. Silverman and Philip D. A. Treffers

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