

Pseudoscience in Therapy

When experiencing mental health challenges, we all deserve treatments that actually work. Whether you are a healthcare consumer, student, or mental health professional, this book will help you recognize implausible, ineffective, and even harmful therapy practices while also considering recent controversies. Research-supported approaches are identified in this book and expanded upon in a companion volume. Chapters cover every major mental disorder and are written by experts in their respective fields. *Pseudoscience in Therapy* is of interest to students taking courses in psychotherapy, counseling, clinical psychology, and behavior therapy, as well as practitioners looking for a guide to supported therapeutic techniques.

Stephen Hupp, PhD, is a licenced clinical psychologist and professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, USA, where he has won the Great Teacher Award and the Champion for Diversity Award. His edited books include *Investigating Pop Psychology* (2023), *Pseudoscience in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy* (2019), and *Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy: Components of Evidence-Based Treatments for Youth and Their Parents* (2018). His coauthored books include *Great Myths of Child Development* (2015), *Great Myths of Adolescence* (2019), and *Thinking Critically about Child Development* (2020). He has also written a skeptical game book for children called *Dr. Huckleberry's True or Malarkey? Superhuman Abilities* (2021).

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OTHER BOOKS

Other Books in This Series

- *Science-Based Therapy*
- *Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy: Components of Evidence-Based Treatments for Youth and Their Parents*
- *Pseudoscience in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy: A Skeptical Field Guide*

Other Books by Stephen Hupp

- *Dr. Huckleberry's True or Malarkey? Superhuman Abilities*
- *Investigating Pop Psychology: Pseudoscience, Fringe Science, and Controversies*
- *Great Myths of Child Development*
- *Great Myths of Adolescence*
- *Thinking Critically about Child Development: Examining Myths and Misunderstandings*

Other Book by Cara L. Santa Maria

- *The Skeptics' Guide to the Universe: How to Know What's Really Real in a World Increasingly Full of Fake*

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A Skeptical Field Guide

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To my daughter, Vyla Mae Hupp, who has already started
changing the world.

(S. H.)

To all those who have supported me on my skeptical journey,
I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

(C. L. S. M.)

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Preface

Stephen Hupp

This book is a curated collection of bad ideas. Now you might be thinking, *I don't really need a curated collection of bad ideas*. But before you put this book down, there's something you should know. You've already started collecting bad ideas, and your collection will likely continue to grow.

Fortunately, this book is also a curated collection of good ideas, and you already have a lot of good ideas in your collection, as well. In fact, you might already be effective at distinguishing between the bad and the good; however, you've learned so many ideas that it's sometimes rather tricky to tell the difference. Thus, a field guide can come in handy to help you sort through and evaluate your current collection of ideas while also giving you a quick reference for when you're exposed to new ideas.

Each chapter of this book has a section that identifies *pseudoscience* – or bad ideas – related to therapy. Each chapter also has a section that identifies *research-supported approaches* – or good ideas – related to therapy. Thus, each chapter will distinguish between these two extremes. To be fair, however, some ideas cannot simply be labeled bad or good. That is to say, there's a fuzzy area between the extremes, and because of this challenge, the pseudoscience section of each chapter acknowledges this fuzzy area by discussing questionable ideas and other controversies as well.

Focus and Structure

This book focuses on pseudoscience and questionable ideas related to therapy with adults while another book in this series focuses on youth (i.e., *Pseudoscience in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*). Chapter 1 defines broad issues related to understanding pseudoscience and research-supported approaches. All of the other chapters describe conditions that are commonly the focus of clinical attention, and they do so in the same order that they are covered in the *Diagnostic and Statistical*

Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision. Chapter authors focus on some or all of the following:

- diagnostic controversies
- questionable assessment practices
- myths that influence treatment
- implausible treatments
- ineffective treatments
- potentially harmful treatments
- undermining evidence-based treatments.

Expert Contributors

Book chapters are written by both clinicians and researchers, the majority of whom are licensed psychologists who also engage in university-based research. Additionally, one chapter is from a family physician and another chapter is from a professor of psychiatry. Contributors are from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and the Netherlands. Many also regularly engage in science communication activities. Several have published prominent books. Lastly, all of the book's contributors are strong advocates for science-based practices in therapy. In sum, each chapter is a great starting point for helping you distinguish between bad ideas and good ideas about therapy.

Target Audience

The goal of this book is to be a handy reference for all therapists including psychologists, counselors, social workers, psychiatrists, and professionals in related disciplines. Relatedly, it may serve as a supplementary text for graduate courses in psychotherapy and counseling. By covering the same broad topics, it works well in tandem with another book in this series, *Science-Based Therapy*.

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