



Russell L. Kolts, Tobyn Bell, James Bennett-Levy, and Chris Irons: *Experiencing Compassion-Focused Therapy from the Inside Out: a Self-Practice/Self-Reflection Workbook for Therapists.* Guilford Press, New York, 2018, 332 pp

Laura Nabors¹

Published online: 9 August 2018
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2018

This is a well-written workbook that has value for novice therapists as well as more experienced ones. The workbook begins with an orientation to compassion-focused therapy (CFT), both defining compassion and providing an integrative map to help the reader understand key skills needed for this work. I really enjoyed the chapter on getting the most from this therapy and the information for using CFT in groups, supervision, and workshops. I think the notion of creating a sense of safeness is valuable in many therapeutic situations.

The authors provide many tools throughout the workbook including activities, surveys, and self-reflection questions that are useful tools for the therapist, as he or she engages in CFT with clients. In module 5, the explanation of “Old Brain-New Brain Loops” was enlightening and the example of therapist’s reflection on how this might unfold in a therapeutic session was very helpful in illustrating the aforementioned concept. I believe attachment style was explained well, and is important to address in therapy sessions. Furthermore, exploring fears and then assisting clients in developing safety strategies are widely applicable concepts, in that they can be used to help clients experiencing a broad range of disorders and stressors. The CFT Case Formulation Worksheet is a useful tool for new practitioners and I also believe it can contribute to treatment

planning and monitoring client progress over the course of treatment.

The extensive information on developing and deepening the “compassionate self” can assist in relating to others and being present to see compassionate attributes that has a very humanistic and positive feel. At the same time, the wealth of information provided by the authors serves as a guide to growing in compassion. The authors also addressed behavioral experiments as a way to provide data for clients to see progress as they adopt the skills. We are a rating-oriented society and rating progress on a scale from 0 to 100% allows clients to estimate where they are as they practice compassion for themselves and others. Behavioral experiments can provide experiential data to guide clients and strengthen their understanding of changes in the self. I believe that the idea of compassion “flowing to the self” is needed in our time-rushed and deadline-driven world. Although the information on multiple selves was highly useful, it would be wonderful to learn even more about this idea with more ideas for engaging with multiple selves. The ending of the book was very insightful and provided steps for guiding compassionate supervision. In sum, I found this workbook to be a helpful and explanatory educational tool that is very educational for psychotherapists.

✉ Laura Nabors
naborsla@ucmail.uc.edu

¹ School of Human Services, College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0068, USA