



Behaviors, Beliefs and Emotions

Shapiro A, Esterson J. Behaviors, Beliefs & Emotions. Optometric Extension Program. Soft-bound, 89 pages.

Reviewed by Sanford M. Gross, MA, OD, Illinois College of Optometry

Behaviors, Beliefs & Emotions by Abraham Shapiro and Jack Esterson provides a read that is both engaging and informative. The book is based on the premise that the symptoms experienced by patients, the underlying psychological processes that cause them, and their clinical courses are related but not obvious.

In the first two chapters, beliefs and their origins as related to patients' behaviors are extensively discussed and analyzed using several major psychological perspectives. The major traditional psychological epistemologies, as well as their potential impacts on beliefs are elucidated in detail throughout Chapter 1. While this is not new material for those of us who successfully completed psychological coursework in college, the paradigms are well elaborated and the review is helpful. Chapter two does an excellent job of then relating potential belief systems of patients to their resultant behavioral patterns. This is all academically interesting material and useful background for anyone who works with people in the helping professions.

The next five chapters discuss different behavioral styles, their potential belief origins, and some potential hints for better managing such patients generally in a clinical setting that addresses functional development. The problematic behavior patterns are familiar to most clinicians in healthcare, but analyzed to render them more informative. The helpful advice is pragmatic, but a bit general in some cases.

The eighth chapter is in some ways the most compelling because it discusses personal aspects of the clinician and how they could impact on patient care. This subject is obviously applicable to a wide variety

of optometric clinical encounters, so it is potentially very useful. Sometimes, the implications for doctor attitudes, beliefs, and emotions were clear; at other times vague. A few of the views expressed seemed a bit arbitrary. For instance, the authors' stated intention to separate personality effects from communication practices. As if they could pragmatically be unpaired in the real world.

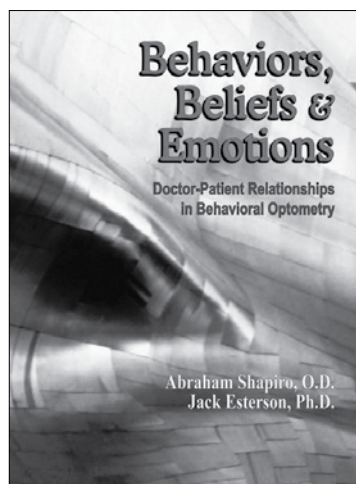
This is followed by a final ninth chapter that includes a variety of additional miscellaneous problematic behavioral styles and, again, wisdom about the approaches for more effective coping with such issues.

The descriptors that most come to mind when rendering an overall opinion of this book are – wise and insightful, but anecdotal and a bit random.

The academic background and informational grounding of the book are very sound in a writing style that is eloquent, yet accessible. For someone with a strong history working with people experiencing functional issues or a clinician with a mental health background, this is an easy sell. However, it lacks the scientific rigor of any investigational

methodology. There is no attempt at any quantitative validation, investigation, or even qualitative case studies. Admittedly, the measurement of “softer” issues, such as behavior and beliefs are less amenable to hardcore science, but still allow for organized empiricism. Both the potential depth and extent of this work's effects would be greatly amplified by those endeavors. As is, it reads like an insightful self-help book for vision therapy clinicians.

In terms of organization, while the book chapters follow a general theme and pattern, there is no sense of progression among the chapters that unifies the material into a gestalt. Additionally, a functional index that helps the reader to locate or return to key topics, as needed for their own emphasis or clarification, is definitely missing. The lack of clearer organization



made it more difficult for me to relate the material to clinical optometric practice in general. Yet, the content of the book itself could be very revelatory to a wide array of clinicians who sometimes struggle with the maladaptive behavioral patterns of either their patients or their own.

Therefore, I feel that the material of this book could be better served as part of a larger volume about optometric clinical practice or clinical communication – a topic that the authors went out of their way to

minimize. Ironically, many of the insights offered by the authors come from clear observational and interventional communication practices. Optometry is a small profession that attempts to unify biological, functional, medical, psychological, and interpersonal components into a coherent whole. Literature that unifies at least some of these aspects can be more helpful than even the wisest, best-written fragments of the whole.



COVD MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS PROGRAMS

In conjunction with our Affinity partners, COVD is pleased to offer its members a number of special member benefit programs and services. Not only can these programs benefit you and your practice, but they help COVD as well. Our affinity partners return a portion of COVD member purchases to support COVD programs and services. These partners include:

VISION WEST, INC. (VWI)

Vision West, Inc. (VWI) is the only buying group owned by the profession. They offer product discounts from over 300 vendors, practice management tools and education seminars for doctors and staff. VWI provides consolidated billing and an experienced customer service department with personal account consultants to assist you. In addition, 1% of purchases made by COVD members are returned to support COVD programs and services. For more information on Vision West and its services call: (800) 640-9485, ext 153.

TRANSFIRST HEALTH SERVICES

TransFirst Health Services provides a state-of-the-art credit card processing program for doctors and other health care providers. COVD members who use TransFirst receive a competitive discount rate, a low monthly maintenance fee, no per item transaction fee and pay no monthly minimum or annual fees. TransFirst also allows members to improve their financial control and cash flow, reduce the costs of collection and allows patients the freedom to choose a service regardless of budget concerns. If you are accepting Visa, Master Card, American Express and Discover Cards, TransFirst is the answer to your billing concerns. For more information call (800) 538-1601 ext 146

COVD PLATINUM PLUS MASTERCARD

COVD is proud to offer the Platinum Plus credit card, a no annual fee MasterCard that provides outstanding benefits, service, worldwide acceptance and convenience. Proudly displaying COVD's name, the card offers a low introductory annual percentage rate on cash advances and balance transfers. Issued by MBNA America Bank, this card has up to \$100,000 of available credit and the benefits of fraud-protection services, emergency-card replacement, a year end-summary of charges and supplemental car rental deductible and accident insurance coverage. To request your COVD Platinum Plus card call: (866)438-6262. Please refer to priority code RDXC when speaking to the MBNA representative to apply for this program.