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Psychology Professor Writes Book to Help OCD Patients Take Control of their Symptoms

Christina J. Taylor, *Sacred Heart University*

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Christina Taylor of Fairfield, a [psychology](#) professor at Sacred Heart University, has published a book about treating and working with people who have obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Taylor's book, *OCD: A Workbook for Clinicians, Children and Teens; Actions to Beat, Control & Defeat Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*, is a guide for clinicians and non-clinicians alike on treating and working with OCD patients. The disorder affects about 2.3 percent of Americans, according to Understanding OCD.

Taylor spent years researching OCD while successfully treating numerous patients in her private practice. "There aren't that many people with specialized training on OCD," said the Fairfield resident and SHU graduate, who has been teaching at the University for the past 40 years. "This is a detailed guide on the treatment of OCD that is much needed."

The company that produced the book, PESI Publishing & Media, described Taylor's workbook as a "creative and interactive book to help children and teens take control of OCD. Children and teens will learn cognitive behavioral strategies to overcome their obsessions and compulsions."

The book includes step-by-step worksheets, exercises and strategies for overcoming the symptoms of OCD, such as worrisome thoughts, perfectionism and hoarding. It also includes relaxation and thinking skills to manage anxiety.

The book aims to help adolescents and teens, but Taylor said she believes adults will find it helpful as well. While research on OCD has come a long way since the 1980s, when the disorder wasn't recognized in any visible way, Taylor said, a stigma still surrounds it, as well as all mental illnesses. "People didn't know how prevalent it was or how to treat it," she said. "There are now evidence-based therapies for

anxiety disorders and OCD.”

Although documented strategies on treating the disorder exist, there’s still a lack of knowledge and expertise, Taylor said, adding that OCD is still misdiagnosed. She recalled one such patient who came to her after being treated unsuccessfully for a personality disorder for seven years. She treated the patient for OCD using cognitive behavior therapy. The patient was better within months, she said.

“You are teaching the person new responses to the obsessions so they gain confidence and control over the OCD,” she said. “I hope the book can help people,” she said. “I hope they use the book with their therapists to engage in proper therapies.”

Taylor has dedicated a great deal of her career to the research of OCD and anxiety disorders. Her interest in psychology grew as she spent summers working at Fairfield Hills Hospital in Newtown, where her mother also worked. “I had hands-on experience with psychological problems and treated mental illness,” she said. “This solidified my interest.”

Taylor studied at SHU for her undergraduate degree, attended the University of Missouri for her master’s degree and earned her doctorate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She then went to Hofstra University for her postdoctoral studies. She was involved in NIMH research at Yale University that allowed her to become a certified panic control expert and provided her with a deep understanding and knowledge of anxiety disorders and OCD.

Taylor facilitates the Fairfield County OCD Support Group that meets monthly at the First Congregational Church in Fairfield. The group, which celebrated their 10th anniversary in September, is open to all individuals dealing with OCD.

Ruth Grant, Taylor’s fellow psychology professor at SHU, said the text’s workbook format “encourages both the providers and the clients to take charge of their management and recovery. It provides an opportunity to place this disorder into perspective, and it empowers people to forge ahead bravely into self-awareness, which is one step to be taken toward control.

“The book is about knowledge, empowerment and courage,” Grant said. “It instructs us to learn all we can about the facts of this condition, to conduct a personal growth assessment of how we are coping with it and to empower change.”

<http://www.sacredheart.edu/aboutshu/news/newsstories/2016/april/psychology-professor-writes-book-to-help-ocd-patients-take-control-of-their-symptoms.html>