

# **Maximizing Mental Health Services**

Proven Practices that Promote  
Emotional Well-Being

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Cognitive Science and Psychology



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# Foreword

Over the last decade, the integration of behavioral health services into primary care centers has become increasingly more common. Due to a lack of access to behavioral treatment, approximately 70% of patients with a behavioral health problem initially present their problem to a primary care provider (PCP) prior to seeking formal treatment (Cunningham, 2009). Furthermore, 30% to 50% of patients in the primary care setting have a behavioral health diagnosis (Cunningham, 2009). The result of such a disclosure by a patient often leads to a referral to a behavioral health specialist outside the primary care clinic; however, only 10% of patients will follow through with the referral (Cunningham, 2009). Convenience is key as patients are more likely to elect to see the behavioral health specialist if the individual is within the same practice as the PCP (Johnson, 2017).

The health-care delivery system has evolved, and both medicine and psychology are no longer operating in different silos as they once did (Johnson, 2017). Recognizing that the majority of those suffering from behavioral health disorders first acknowledge an issue to the primary care doctor, the National Health Reform Act of 2010 emphasized the need for behavioral care providers (BCP) to be present within the primary care center (Oberlander, 2010).

The BCP not only functions as a primary care psychotherapist but also educates physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners on the need and use of various behavioral interventions to help facilitate positive behavioral change. The importance of the BCP to understand and utilize evidence-based practices (EBPs) in psychotherapy is, therefore, paramount as these providers have a substantial responsibility to utilize efficacious psychotherapeutic interventions.

The use of a physician assistant as a behavioral medicine provider is a cost-effective way to increase access to prescriptive psychotherapeutic services. With the development of post-graduate residencies that train these providers, physician assistants can gain advanced training in psychopharmacology, behavioral interventions, and evidence-based practices in psychotherapy (PhysicianAssistantEDU, 2019).

With the rise of prescriptive psychotropic medications to immediately treat behavioral health conditions, the undesired side effects such as gastrointestinal issues, weight gain, and loss of sex drive to serious side effects such as metabolic syndrome and cardiac abnormalities carry a heavy burden for both prescribers and patients. Within the Hippocratic Oath, one of the promises medical providers take as they begin their journey in medicine is “first, do no harm” (or “primum non nocere,” the Latin translation from the original Greek). There is a feeling amongst providers, however, that they are winning the battle, i.e., mental health symptomatology, yet losing the war, i.e., the patient’s overall health.

Restoring psychotherapy as a first-line intervention is perhaps the greatest asset for both the patient and treating provider. It is vital, however, that the psychotherapeutic interventions utilized by the treating provider must be based on scientifically supported evidence as the patient deserves relief from their symptomatology with the least amount of intrusion, without harm, within the shortest amount of time.

In *Maximizing Mental Health Services: Proven Practices that Promote Emotional Well-Being*, the authors skillfully outline evidence-based therapeutic practices for individual therapy, family therapy, and group therapy that promote improved therapeutic outcomes. This is a great resource for students entering the healthcare arena, the individual psychotherapist in private practice, the behavioral care provider in a busy primary care center, as well as primary care providers themselves and the everyday person interested in their own behavioral health.

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**About Dr. Lee:**

Dr. Stephen Lee earned a Doctor of Behavioral Health and is a clinical professor in Westfield State University’s Physician Assistant Program. He has taught behavioral medicine at various graduate programs including Springfield College, Bay Path University, Cummings Graduate Institute for Behavioral Health Studies, and Quinnipiac University. Dr. Lee has over 25 years of experience in medicine, including over a decade in military medicine practicing as a Navy Corpsman and an Army Battalion Medical Officer for a mountain infantry unit. He is the founder of a behavioral health practice, *Synergistic Health Services*, in Connecticut that provides psychotherapy and medication management services as well as consults with medical practices around the country to integrate behavioral health

services into their primary care clinics. He has piloted an integrated behavioral health practice into two large primary care centers in Connecticut and has partnered with several health care systems to create a Post-Graduate Integrated Behavioral Health Residency Program to increase access to behavioral health services in underserved areas. He was selected by the International Federation of Green Crescents to serve as an expert in addiction medicine and represent the United States for a conference consisting of a coalition of 52 countries to address and combat addiction around the world.



# Preface

In an ever-changing and at times unpredictable world, the concept of what constitutes emotional well-being and appropriate mental health can seem difficult to grasp and even more difficult to embrace. *Maximizing Mental Health Services: Proven Practices that Promote Emotional Well-Being* was written for mental health professionals, professors, graduate students, as well as individuals and family members who are interested in learning more about therapeutic practices and their effect on well-being. This tome will be helpful to all those who are struggling with personal issues and who need to infuse positivity, safety, and resolution into their lives with the help of a trained professional. The path involved in moving from mental illness and distress to mental health and wellness takes time, a commitment to ethical practices, and a deep understanding of the multitude of evidence-based practices that are available to therapists and counselors to use.

Our desire to write this book arose from the following concerns:

- *Our understanding that an estimated 44 million people will be diagnosed with a mental illness in 2019 alone and these individuals deserve appropriate care;*
- *Our knowledge that positive mental health is essential to living a life that is replete with fulfilling emotions, experiences, and friendships and that these are within everyone's reach;*
- *Our desire to ensure that the next generation has access to quality mental health care that is specific to their needs, which is offered by practitioners who are well versed in how to identify and treat individuals, families, couples, and groups appropriately;*
- *Our awareness that mental health professionals perform a much-needed task and without a clear and deep understanding of evidence-based practices, they may not be able to fully help their clients;*

- *Our belief that in sharing the latest in evidence-based practices, those seeking emotional well-being will find ways to cope and conquer whatever is holding them back from creating their best version of themselves.*

With those in need of mental health services climbing into the millions, more than ever before practitioners need to have a clear understanding of therapies that can help their clients become whole again. In the chapters to follow, the authors take time to help the reader understand the nuances of mental health and mental illness and how it manifests itself in a variety of ways in different populations. They then offer a clear explanation of evidence-based practices and how they can be used to help individuals, couples, families, and groups to understand, cope with, and, when possible, overcome the issues that exist in their lives. In order to provide as much support to the reader as possible, there is a chapter on promising practices and a resource chapter to help in accessing more information included as well.

This book was written by a highly seasoned team of practitioners and scholars including, but not limited to, a psychologist, a counselor, and an educator with a wealth of experience working with individuals who suffer from mental illness. It seeks to add to the body of literature that captures pertinent information on the mental health illness while emphasizing evidenced-based and related practices that hold promise in addressing it.

*Maximizing Mental Health Services: Proven Practices that Promote Emotional Well-Being* places a premium on supporting the therapist and client in meaningful ways. With so much at stake, it has become increasingly more important to find avenues for mental well-being to be cultivated and nurtured so that all human beings can be emotionally strong and vital members of their families and communities. The authors hope that this book is a building block towards a new beginning for those who need it, regardless if that is the professor or student, therapist, the client, or the family of a loved one in need.

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# Acronyms

ADHD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A chronic condition whose symptoms include a lack of ability to focus on a particular task for any length of time as well as having signs of hyperactivity and sometimes being impulsive.
AMCD	Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development: Organization that provides specific competencies for therapists when working with diverse clients.
APA	American Psychiatric Association
BD	Behavior Disorder: one of several anxiety disorders
BPD	Borderline Personality Disorder: a disorder characterized by impairments in empathy, intimacy, self-direction, and self-image, as well as emotional liability, anxiety, and separation insecurity.
BSFT	Brief Strategic Family Therapy: a form of therapy that focuses on adolescent substance abuse using a manualized system.
CBT	Cognitive Behavior Therapy: a form of therapy that aims to reframe negative thought patterns and subsequent behaviors.
DBT	Dialectical Behavior Therapy: a form of therapy that combines classical and operant conditioning through the analysis of behavior.
EBP	Evidence-Based Practices: The integration of clinical expertise, research, and patient values that provide therapeutic practices from therapist to patients in need of assistance.
EEFT	Emotionally-Focused Family Therapy: Therapy that focuses on increasing family members' abilities to help promote mental health recovery in their loved ones rather than problem-solving.
EFT	Emotionally Focused Couples' Therapy: attachment-based therapy approach that is used with couples in which one partner has depression, chronic illness, or post-traumatic stress disorders.
FFT	Functional Family Therapy: Short-term therapy based on a manualized system that targets children and adolescents who exhibit problems with juvenile delinquency, substance abuse,

and violent tendencies.

- HIPAA** Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996: U.S. legislation that provides security and privacy for personal medical information.
- iCBT** Online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Using traditional CBT in an online format that may include video chat, text, email, audio files, pictures or animations.
- MBCT** Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: a form of therapy that combines mindfulness practices with elements of CBT.
- MBRP** Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention: an intervention that combines mindfulness practices with coping strategies.
- NBCC** National Board for Certified Counselors: and international organizations that supports certified counselors.
- OCD** Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: one of several anxiety disorders
- PTSD** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: one of several anxiety disorders
- SFBT** Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: used to find a quick solution to an issue while working towards a more secure future. May be used with other therapy styles.

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## About the Authors

### **Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD**

Dr. Nicholas D. Young has worked in diverse educational roles for more than 30 years, serving as a teacher, counselor, principal, special education director, graduate professor, graduate program director, graduate dean, and longtime psychologist and superintendent of schools. He was named the Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year; and he completed a distinguished Fulbright program focused on the Japanese educational system through the collegiate level. Dr. Young is the recipient of numerous other honors and recognitions including the General Douglas MacArthur Award for distinguished civilian and military leadership and the Vice Admiral John T. Hayward Award for exemplary scholarship. He holds several graduate degrees including a PhD in educational administration and an EdD in educational psychology.

Dr. Young has served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserves combined for over 34 years; and he graduated with distinction from the U.S. Air War College, the U.S. Army War College, and the U.S. Navy War College. After completing a series of senior leadership assignments in the U.S. Army Reserves as the commanding officer of the 287<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (DS), the 405<sup>th</sup> Area Support Company (DS), the 405<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, and the 399<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, he transitioned to his current military position as a faculty instructor at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA. He currently holds the rank of Colonel.

Dr. Young is also a regular presenter at state, national, and international conferences; and he has written many books, book chapters, and/or articles on various topics in education, counseling, and psychology. Some of his most recent books include *Masculinity in the Making: Managing the Transition to Manhood* (in-press); *The Burden of Being a Boy: Bolstering Educational and Emotional Well-Being in Young Males* (in-press); *The Special Education Toolbox: Supporting Exceptional Teachers, Students, and Families* (2019); *Sounding the Alarm in the Schoolhouse: Safety, Security and Student Well-Being* (2019); *Creating Compassionate Classrooms: Understanding the*

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### **Melissa A. Mumby, EdD**

Dr. Mumby has worked in various levels of K-12 education for over a decade. She began her career as a high school English and drama teacher, and then transitioned into a role as a special educator, working with both middle and high school students. From there she became a special education coordinator for grades K-5, and eventually the special education director for grades K-12 at a local charter school. She is currently an educational team leader in an urban public school district in Massachusetts. Dr. Mumby holds an undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, as well as an MEd and EdD. from American International College, both in education. Her dissertation, "Is there an app for that? Teachers' perceptions of the impact of digital tools on literacy in the secondary classroom" focused on the ways in which technology can increase learning outcomes for struggling learners. She has written book chapters on strategies for helping underperforming students find success in the classroom and she is a primary author on *The Special Education Toolbox: Supporting Exceptional Teachers, Students, and Families* (2019); *Educating the Experienced: Challenges and Best Practices in Adult Learning* (2019); *Embracing and Educating the Autistic Child: Valuing Those Who Color Outside the Lines* (2018). Dr. Mumby can be reached at [mumbym@springfieldpublicschools.com](mailto:mumbym@springfieldpublicschools.com).

### **Jennifer A. Smolinski, J.D.**

Attorney Jennifer Smolinski has worked in education for more than three years. Her role within higher education includes the creation of, and coordinator for, the Center for Accessibility Services and Academic Accommodations at American International College located in Springfield, Massachusetts. She has also taught criminal justice and legal research and writing classes within the field of higher education. Prior to her work at the collegiate level, Attorney Smolinski worked as a solo-practitioner conducting education and disability advocacy.

Attorney Smolinski received a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Connecticut, a master's in psychology and Counseling as well as a master's of Higher Education Student Affairs from Salem State University and her law degree from Massachusetts School of Law. She is currently an EdD in Educational Leadership and Supervision candidate at American International College,

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Attorney Smolinski has become a regular presenter educating the faculty, staff and students at institutes of higher education on disabilities and accommodations at the collegiate level and has presented to local high school special education departments on the transition to college under the Americans with Disabilities Act. She has co-authored *Securing the Schoolyard: Protocols that Promote Safety and Positive Student Behaviors* (2018); *Sounding the Alarm in the Schoolhouse: Safety, Security and Student Well-Being* (2018); *Captivating Classrooms: Educational Strategies to Enhance Student Engagement* (2018); *Guardian of the Next Generation: Igniting the Passion for Quality Teaching* (2018); and *Making the Grade: Promoting Positive Outcomes for Students with Learning Disabilities* (2018). She can be reached at [Jennifer.Smolinski@aic.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Smolinski@aic.edu).