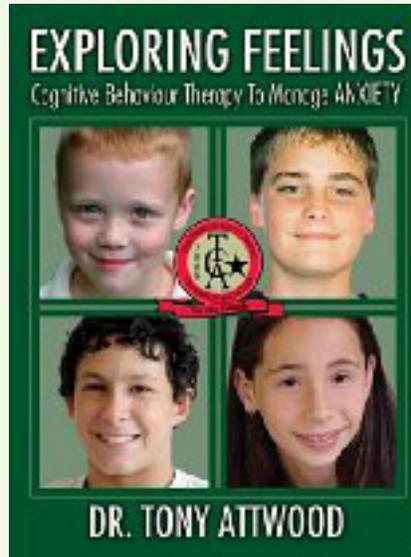


from the Reach Library....

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Exploring Feelings – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy To Manage Anxiety By Dr. Tony Attwood

This is basically a workbook to be used with small groups of children ages 9-12 who have Asperger's Syndrome, but it can be modified to be used with almost all children as well as adolescents and adults. It is a program that can be delivered by a counselor, teacher, behaviour consultant, other professional or parent. The program can also be modified to be used with just one child, and even if one doesn't follow the week by week program, ideas can be pulled from the workbook to focus on particular issues. For those who want to use it to run group sessions, it includes details for the facilitator on how to structure each session.



The book begins with a clearly written, helpful introductory section giving some background on the key matters in the book, such as cognitive behaviour therapy, executive function problems in people with ASD, using social stories and comic strip conversations, relaxation techniques, etc. Since reading the minds or emotions of others is a challenge for people with ASD, cognitive behaviour therapy, which focuses on understanding how one's thoughts affect their feelings, seems like the perfect fit to assist in overcoming anxiety or other negative emotional states. It's just that some more initial education about understanding emotions and what others may be thinking is required.

The sessions begin with what Attwood calls "affective education", where the student learns first to identify and talk about feeling happy and then about feeling anxious. In both cases, the student learns the physical associations with these feelings and what kinds of events and thoughts might trigger these feelings both for themselves and others. Students are encouraged to identify situations that might make them feel anxious and to use concrete ways to understand their level of anxiety, such as standing on a spot on a rope, where one end of the rope is highly anxious and the other is calm. They are encouraged to examine their responses

and to develop toolboxes of activities and strategies that will help them manage their anxiety. They are also encouraged to toss out tools that haven't worked for them, or that will ultimately make things worse.

Anxiety is a common problem that can be very debilitating. This book takes an approach that is used by mental health professionals and makes it simple and accessible so that it is more widely available. It is an admirable undertaking and more people with anxiety will benefit as a result.

This book is available in the mental health section of the Reach specialized book lending library.