

**Book Review: Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change (5<sup>th</sup> ed).**

**Title:** Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change (5<sup>th</sup> ed).

**Author:** Michael J. Lambert

**Publisher:** John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**Reviewer:** Aaron Jarden, clinical psychology student and PhD candidate, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

The four previous editions of this text by Allen Bergin and Sol Garfield, covering the previous three decades, are legendary and have had an enormous impact on the field of psychotherapy. The pedigree and status of this definitive reference volume in both the clinical and academic worlds is well known. This latest revised and updated edition, now edited by Michael Lambert, carries on this lineage of quality in fine fashion. This text continues to stand as one of the most important, thorough, and scholarly overviews of research findings in the field of psychotherapy.

The 18 chapters are compiled by experts in each topic area, and are broken into four main sections covering a diverse content area of psychotherapy. These four sections include 1) the historical, methodological, ethical and conceptual foundations of psychotherapy, 2) evaluating the ingredients of therapeutic efficacy, 3) the major approaches in psychotherapy, and 4) research on applications for special groups and settings, such as children, culturally diverse populations and family therapy.

From a boarder perspective, this text craftily highlights and integrates controversies in each area of research and practice, discusses at lengths the pros and cons of various treatment approaches, and includes the most recent advances, important changes, and significant challenges to the field. As a summary of accumulated knowledge and a guide for future practice, there is perhaps no equal.

Of particular interest to clinicians are perhaps the excellent chapter on ‘cognitive and cognitive behavioural therapies’ by Aaron Beck and Steven Hollon, and the chapter on ‘the efficacy and effectiveness of psychotherapy’ by Michael Lambert and Benjamin Ogles. These chapters present the reader with a detailed overview, as well as a thorough contemporary empirical viewpoint.

From the readers’ perspective, trawling through the 864 pages can be much akin to reading a dictionary, analysing a political party manifesto, or studying higher predicate calculus, and thus this text as a whole is not easily digestible. The reader may be overwhelmed by the sheer detail and quantity of information, and

thus I doubt most will have the time or attentiveness to read the entire volume. However, once the format is appreciated, the diligent and active clinician can quickly review an area that is applicable to their research or practice.

In summary, on the up side, a standard and essential reference for citation and practice of empirically supported treatments that will inspire you to view research as a necessary and foundational component of excellent practice. On the down side, the text has a rather bland and boring cover, and at over two hundred dollars, one may alternatively invest in a small child or retirement scheme.