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How *Mind Over Mood* Can Help You

An oyster creates a pearl out of a grain of sand. The grain of sand irritates the oyster. In response, the oyster creates a smooth, protective coating that covers the sand and provides relief. This protective coating is a beautiful pearl. For an oyster, an irritant becomes the seed for something new and beautiful. Similarly, *Mind Over Mood* will help you develop something new: beneficial skills to lead you out of your current discomfort. The skills you learn by using this book will help you feel better and will continue to have value in your life long after your original problems are gone.

We hope that, like many people who have learned the methods taught in this book, you will look back at the initial discomfort that led you to *Mind Over Mood* as a “blessing in disguise,” because it provided you the opportunity and motivation to develop pearls of wisdom and invaluable new perspectives that will help you enjoy the rest of your life more fully.

HOW WILL THIS BOOK HELP YOU?

Mind Over Mood teaches you strategies, methods, and skills that have been shown to be helpful with mood problems such as depression, anxiety, anger, panic, jealousy, guilt, and shame. The skills taught in this book can also help you solve relationship problems, handle stress better, improve your self-esteem, become less fearful, and grow more confident. These strategies also can help you if you are struggling with alcohol or drug use. *Mind Over Mood* is designed to teach you skills in a step-by-step fashion, so you can rapidly make the changes that are important to you.

The ideas in this book come from cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), one of today’s most effective forms of psychotherapy. “Cognitive” refers to what we think and how we think. Cognitive-behavioral therapists emphasize understanding the thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors connected to our moods, physical experiences, and events in our

lives. A central idea in CBT is that our *thoughts* about an event or experience powerfully affects our emotional, behavioral, and physical responses to it.

For example, if we are standing in line at the grocery store and think, “This will take a while. I might as well just relax,” we are likely to feel calm. Our bodies stay relaxed, and we may start a conversation with someone standing nearby or pick up a magazine. However, if we think, “They shouldn’t have such a long line. They should hire more clerks,” we may feel upset and irritated. Our bodies become tense and fidgety, and we may spend our time complaining to other customers and the clerk.

Mind Over Mood teaches you to identify and understand the connections among your thoughts, moods, behaviors, and physical reactions in everyday situations like this one, as well as during major events in your life. You will learn to think about yourself and situations in more helpful ways, and to change the thinking patterns and behaviors that keep you stuck in distressing moods and relationships. You will discover how to make changes in your life when your thoughts alert you to problems that need to be solved. In the end, these changes should help you feel happier, calmer, and more confident. In addition, the skills you learn using *Mind Over Mood* help you create and enjoy more positive relationships.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF THIS BOOK IS HELPING?

For any of us, it is much easier to keep trying something when we know we are making progress. For example, when we first learn to read, we often begin by learning the alphabet and recognizing individual letters. Initially, we need to put a lot of effort and practice into recognizing letters. As our skill develops, our recognition of letters becomes easier and more automatic. Over time, we stop paying attention to individual letters, because we have learned to put these letters together and learn simple words. As new readers, we may scan a page looking for words we know. Over time, we develop the skill to read simple sentences, and we know we are making progress when we can read more complicated sentences, paragraphs, and simple books. Soon we are not attending to individual words, but to the meaning of what we are reading. In school, children become better readers year by year, and their reading-level progress can be measured by tests.

Similarly, you will be able to notice and measure the progress you make in using *Mind Over Mood*. In the early weeks, you will learn individual skills. Over time, you will learn to combine these skills in ways that improve your moods and your life. One way to measure your progress is to measure your moods at regular intervals as you develop and practice *Mind Over Mood* skills. Chapter 4 helps you do this and shows you how to graph your scores so you can see your progress over time.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Mind Over Mood is different from other books you may have read. It is designed to help you develop new ways of thinking and behaving that will help you feel better.

These *Mind Over Mood* skills require practice, patience, and perseverance. Therefore, it is important for you to complete the exercises in each chapter. Even some of the skills that look easy can be more complicated than they seem when you actually try to do them. Most people find that the more time they spend practicing each skill, the more benefit they get.

In the beginning, it is helpful to spend some time on these skills every day. You may find it helpful to set aside a regular time each day to read about or practice *Mind Over Mood* skills. If you move too quickly through the book without giving yourself adequate practice time, you will not learn how to apply the skills to your own problems. Thus speed of learning is not the important thing. It is more important to spend enough time with each chapter until you understand the ideas and can use them in your life in a way that is meaningful and helps you feel better. You may find it only takes an hour or so to do this with some chapters of the book. For other chapters, it will take weeks or even months of practice before the skills you learn become automatic and you begin to feel the full benefit.

Mind Over Mood can be customized so that you can read chapters in an order that is likely to be most helpful for you. For example, if you have chosen this book to work on particular moods, at the end of Chapter 4 there is a recommendation that you read the chapters about moods (13, 14, and/or 15) that pertain to you. You can skip any mood chapters that don't apply. After you read those chapters, you can follow the chapter sequence recommended for each particular mood or moods. Alternatively, you may choose to read the book straight through and do the exercises beginning with Chapter 2 and ending with Chapter 16.

If you are using *Mind Over Mood* as part of therapy, your therapist may recommend a different order for reading chapters. There are many ways to customize development of *Mind Over Mood* skills, and your therapist may have their own idea about which sequence will work best for you. If you are bringing this book to the attention of your therapist, you might suggest that he or she read the "A Brief Message for Clinicians and Interested Readers" on pages xv–xvii.

Can You Use *Mind Over Mood* Skills for Issues Other Than Moods?

Yes. The same *Mind Over Mood* skills that help manage moods can also help you with stress; alcohol and drug use; eating issues such as bingeing, purging, or overeating; relationship struggles; low self-esteem; and other issues. It also can be used to develop positive moods, such as happiness and a sense of meaning and purpose in your life.

What If You Want to Use Worksheets More Than Once?

Throughout the book, there are exercises designed to help you learn and apply the important skills introduced in that chapter. The worksheets that accompany these exercises are meant to be practiced over time. Additional copies of many of the exercise

worksheets can be found in the Appendix at the end of the book (and all of them are available to download for your personal use at [www.guilford.com/p/greenberger](#)), so that you can copy and use them whenever you think they might help.

Mind Over Mood skills and strategies are based on decades of research. These are proven, practical, and powerful methods that, once learned, lead to greater happiness and life satisfaction. By investing time in reading this book and practicing what you learn, you are taking steps to transform your life in a positive way.

Chapter 1 Summary

- ▶ Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a proven, effective therapy for depression, anxiety, anger, and other moods.
- ▶ CBT can also be used to help with eating disorders, alcohol and drug use, stress, low self-esteem, and many other problems.
- ▶ *Mind Over Mood* is designed to teach CBT skills in a step-by-step fashion.
- ▶ Most people find that the more time they spend practicing each skill, the more benefit they get.
- ▶ There are guides throughout the book to help you customize the chapter reading order so you can target the moods that concern you the most.