

BOOK REVIEW

You Will Get Through This: A Mental Health Tool Kit – Help for Depression, Anxiety, Grief, and More

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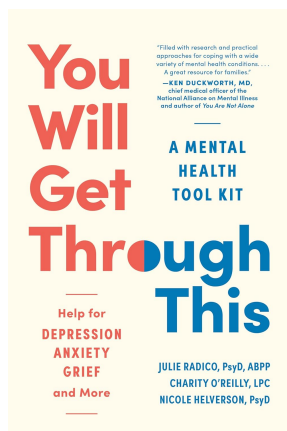
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Book Title: You Will Get Through This: A Mental Health Tool Kit – Help for Depression, Anxiety, Grief, and More

Authors: Julie Radico, Charity O'Reilly, and Nicole Helverson

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Training laypeople to provide first aid for minor physical problems is commonplace. For mental health concerns, however, there is often no middle ground between a scheduled visit to a doctor or therapist and calling the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or going to the local emergency department.¹ Since 2008, the nonprofit organization Mental Health First Aid USA has provided training in “how to identify and respond to signs of mental duress, substance use, or mental health crises” to more than 4 million people, just over 1% of the US population.² In *You Will Get Through This: A Mental Health Tool Kit*, Dr Julie Radico, a clinical psychologist who previously worked in academic family medicine, and therapists Charity O'Reilly and Dr Nicole Helverson introduce this concept to the general reader. Unlike other books that focus on a single condition (eg, depression), this book covers a spectrum of mental, social, sexual, and physical health topics, or what the authors term “the challenges of being human” (p 2). The authors intend *You Will Get Through This* to be a starting point for understanding emotional struggles and mental illness and navigating the health system, and they encourage readers to “speak with a health professional about what you read here and how it can be applied to you” (p 3).

The book is divided into five parts. The first and longest, “Mental Health,” consists of chapters on depression, anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety, panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, developmental trauma, borderline personality disorder, and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder. The chapters range from 8 to 11 pages and review key background information, professional treatment approaches (medications and psychotherapy), self-help strategies and coping skills, overcoming barriers to feeling better, communication techniques for affected persons or loved ones, and a case study example. Chapters end with short reading lists of books and other informational resources (eg, phone numbers, websites, e-mail addresses).

The “Social Health” section includes chapters on interpersonal relationships, loneliness, work stress and burnout, and grief. The chapter structure remains generally consistent, except that professional treatment approaches are occasionally omitted. The section on sexual health encompasses chapters on infertility and pregnancy loss, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. Physical health chapters discuss poor body image, disordered eating, addiction, chronic pain, and poor sleep. Finally, the “Getting Support” section provides tips on finding a mental health professional, navigating primary care, and using health insurance to pay for care.

Although some may utilize the book as a reference for specific health conditions, it is an easy read from front to back. The descriptions of psychotropic medications and their indications were accurate, and I learned new details about different types of psychotherapy. In writing for a broad audience, the authors make special efforts to be inclusive of historically marginalized persons and discuss the impacts of individual and institutional racism, sexism, and implicit bias, where relevant. For example, in the infertility chapter, they observe that “white, cisgender women and heterosexual couples have been centered

in the research and treatment of reproductive concerns, to the detriment of other races, genders, and identities” (p 144).

Overall, *You Will Get Through This* is a valuable and up-to-date resource for people seeking mental health first aid for themselves or loved ones. It is designed to complement, but not replace, care from family physicians and mental health professionals. Each relatively short chapter provides considerably more in-depth information than a typical online or electronic health record-generated patient education handout. Physicians could recommend that patients purchase the book or check it out from their local library, while educators could use it as a teaching tool for health professions students and primary care residents.

REFERENCES

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