

Childhood Depression

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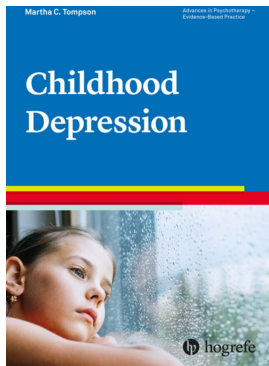
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Dr Martha C. Tompson’s book on childhood depression is an indispensable resource for clinicians seeking practical, actionable tools to diagnose and treat young patients. This book is volume 54 in the *Advances in Psychotherapy: Evidence Based Practice*¹ series, specifically addressing the often-elusive area of childhood depressive disorders and providing a clear roadmap for clinicians.

The book begins with clear definitions and essential vocabulary, which is particularly helpful for clinicians without traditional clinical psychology backgrounds. Tompson then guides the reader through a focused discussion of childhood depression, distinguishing it from other diagnoses in a way that is structured and easy to follow. This organization allows the book to function as both a quick, accessible reference and a comprehensive guide for those working with children experiencing depression or suspected depression.

One of the book’s major strengths is its focus on practical tools for busy clinicians. Tompson provides detailed coverage of diagnostic methods, treatment approaches, diagnostic and screening tools, common pitfalls to avoid, and practical guidance on how to navigate each stage of diagnosis and treatment. This material is particularly helpful for professionals in family medicine, pediatrics, and school counseling, who may be the first to encounter children struggling with mental health issues.

While experienced clinical psychologists may not find entirely new insights, the book offers an easily accessible set of tools that can be quickly referenced. For clinicians with less experience in diagnosing and treating childhood depression, Tompson’s work is a valuable resource for learning how to identify and differentiate various depressive disorders and to take initial steps toward treatment. This guidance can help reduce or eliminate delays caused by external referrals.

Tompson’s emphasis on the distinction between childhood depression and depression in older adolescents or adults is especially important. She underscores the need for tailored diagnostic and treatment approaches, offering a clear, actionable path for clinicians to follow. This specificity makes the book particularly useful in primary care settings with integrated behavioral health, where medical providers and psychologists work together to treat young patients.

More than half of the volume is dedicated to detailed descriptions, figures, tables, and worksheets dedicated to helping the reader learn to guide families in family-focused treatment specifically for childhood depressive disorders. Tompson breaks down how to approach each therapy session, detailing the number of sessions and the focus for each. The margin notes, helpful figures, and tables are incorporated throughout, making the content easy to navigate and more accessible for clinicians in practice.

Tompson’s use of vignettes and examples further strengthens the book’s practical value. These examples, along with the book’s well-organized structure, ensure that clinicians can easily find relevant information and apply it in their work. The margin notes serve as additional reminders of key concepts, enhancing the book’s usability as a reference tool.

What sets this book apart from other manuals on childhood depression is its specificity. While many other texts combine the evaluation and treatment of childhood and adolescent depression, Tompson focuses solely on childhood depression, carefully addressing the unique challenges in diagnosing and treating this age group.

Tompson's 25+ years of expertise in evaluating and developing family-based treatments for children, adolescents, and adults shine through in this volume. The clear organization, approachable language, and balanced focus on both diagnostic strategies and treatment approaches make the book a must-have guide for professionals at all levels. This book is ideal for anyone working with children facing depression—from family doctors to school counselors. Tompson effectively simplifies complex concepts, offering valuable insights, practical examples, and step-by-step guidance to help clinicians make a real difference in the lives of children struggling with depression.

REFERENCE

1. Society of Clinical Psychology (American Psychological Association, Division 12). *Advances in Psychotherapy: Evidence-Based Practice* [Book series]. Hogrefe; 2024. Accessed July 27, 2025. <https://div12.org/advances-in-psychotherapy-evidenced-based-practice-book-series>