Clarion Review

Self-Help

Innovative Holistic Approaches to PTSD and Life Stress
Hemant Thakur
BookSurge
978-1-4392-3870-7
Three Stars (out of Five)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the scourge of countless trauma survivors. It is an insidious condition that causes emotional and physical distress to reoccur, sometimes years after the original trauma, so that victims feel trapped by the past and condemned to relive their worst moments. Any useful innovations in treatment are thus welcome to both treators and survivors. *Innovative Holistic Approaches to PTSD and Life Stress* offers a seasoned military psychiatrist's take on understanding and combating PTSD.

Dr. Thakur has a wealth of experience, and he writes clearly and logically, using an approach that incorporates self-empowerment and holistic methods. But while he has assembled some useful information and workable concepts, he has unfortunately missed the mark of writing the kind of accessible, go-to type of book that someone would be likely to refer to regularly. The text relies heavily on lists, diagrams, and pie charts, and is interspersed with philosophical concepts in an uneasy hybrid that is part training manual, part Deepak Chopra. Chapters include lengthy lists, such as "12 Steps to Achieving Goals," "Seven Human Requirements," and "32 Governing Values," and charts like "Laws of Action" and "Divide goals in eight sections." These are not user-friendly, and would require a great deal of self-discipline to work with, particularly for someone struggling with PTSD symptoms. He does provide anecdotes, but more in-depth case studies would have helped bring his techniques to life.

The author may have overreached, simply because he has so much to offer about an enormous subject. This work, based in part on the author's training efforts, reads more like a textbook than a self-help book or workbook for general readers. A clearer vision his specific audience would have better served the author to help disseminate his expertise.

Despite its flaws *Innovative Holistic Approaches* includes a good bibliography that nicely embraces divergent sources, including both scholarly articles and philosophical/spiritual

works. It also offers good descriptions of stress, conditioned responses, and PTSD itself (although this begins on page 181 and would have been more useful in the preface). Overall, the book reinforces the case for both professionals and PTSD survivors to look beyond medication in order to maximize the potential for healing.

Kristin Putchinksi