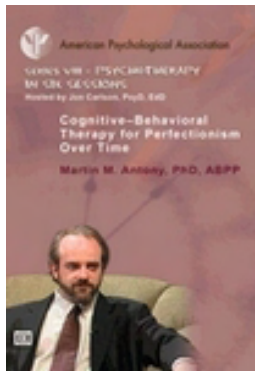


## Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for the Too-Perfect Client

A review of the video



### Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Perfectionism Over Time

with Martin M. Antony

Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008. American

Psychological Association Psychotherapy Video Series VIII, Item No.

4310841. \$399.00

---

Reviewed by

[Nancy L. Murdock](#)

[April L. Connery](#)

Why should one be interested in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for the treatment of excessive perfectionism? Research has shown the CBT has been overwhelmingly effective in the treatment of such problems, including disorders

such as phobias, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression (Lambert & Ogles, 2004). This empirical support, along with the overwhelming popularity of the CBT approach among both clients and therapists, suggests that it would be useful for both students and professionals to be conversant with this orientation. A part of the American Psychological Association (APA) Psychotherapy in Six Sessions series, *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Perfectionism Over Time* is a four-DVD set presenting six CBT therapy sessions over a two-month period with a Caucasian female client, Amy, conducted by Martin Antony.

In these interviews, Antony effectively demonstrates the fundamentals of CBT as well as providing an opportunity to review one client's presentation of excessive perfectionism and Antony's methods of assessment. As an expert in the field and a coauthor of the book *When Perfect Isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping With Perfectionism* (Antony & Swinson, 1998), Antony's interventions would be a worthy study for anyone wishing to learn more about perfectionism and the CBT approach to it.

Throughout the filmed sessions, Antony demonstrates the use of classic CBT techniques, including perspective shifting, the use of thought records, exposure therapy, and Socratic questioning, as well as the all-important structuring of the counseling session. His CBT style is by the book and could serve as a comparison with other theoretical models, making this presentation a potentially valuable tool for novice therapists who wish to learn more about the process of therapy from this perspective. Professionals who are interested in learning classic CBT or

more about how perfectionism can be approached will also benefit from watching the presentation.

One of the most useful features of this series is the menu options on the DVD that allow the viewer to watch individual sessions without interruption or with added voice-over commentary by Antony. The annotated sessions also include an interview with series host Jon Carlson after the session. In his voice-overs, Antony provides useful comments during the counseling session that inform the viewer of the purpose of interventions as well as a theoretical conceptualization of the client's presentation. He also integrates personal experiences with past clients as well as valuable CBT resources. At times he reveals his wish to have done something different in the sessions. In postsession discussions, host Carlson asks questions about the counseling session that one might imagine viewers would ask as well.

The overall quality of the production is excellent, making these DVDs ideal for large-scale educational usage. In fact, one of our few reservations about this video series has to do with how well they are tailored for viewers' uses. APA indicates on its website that the videos can be used for professional development and for education/training purposes. Pleasing such a broad audience involves some compromises, such as omitting information that might be useful only to one subset of viewers. For instance, student therapists in training might benefit if the assumptions underlying the school of thought were reviewed more thoroughly in the initial discussion section of the series. For the professional, the brief references to relevant research may seem somewhat lacking. However,

these minor limitations hardly detract from the overall contribution of the series. Viewers might also object to Antony's reaction to the client's revelation during the initial section that she is purging. He does only a very basic exploration of this behavior. However, in the postsession review, Antony reassures the skeptical viewer that he and the client had previously discussed this issue and had concluded that her eating-related issues would be better addressed in a separate, more extensive, course of therapy.

Overall, *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Perfectionism Over Time* represents an excellent addition to the APA library of video presentations. We enthusiastically recommend this series to trainees in the field who wish to see CBT in action and learn about approaches to clients who display perfectionistic tendencies.

Professionals who wish to refresh their knowledge of CBT or who are searching for ways to deal with these same clients will also benefit from watching this DVD set.

---

## References

- Antony, M. M., & Swinson, R. P. (1998). *When perfect isn't good enough: Strategies for coping with perfectionism*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.
- Lambert, M. J., & Ogles, B. M. (2004). The efficacy and effectiveness of

psychotherapy. In M. J. Lambert (Ed.), *Bergin and Garfield's handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change* (5th ed., pp. 139–193). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

---

PsycCRITIQUES

January 7, 2009, Vol. 54, Release 1, Article 16

1554-0138

[© 2009, American Psychological Association](#)