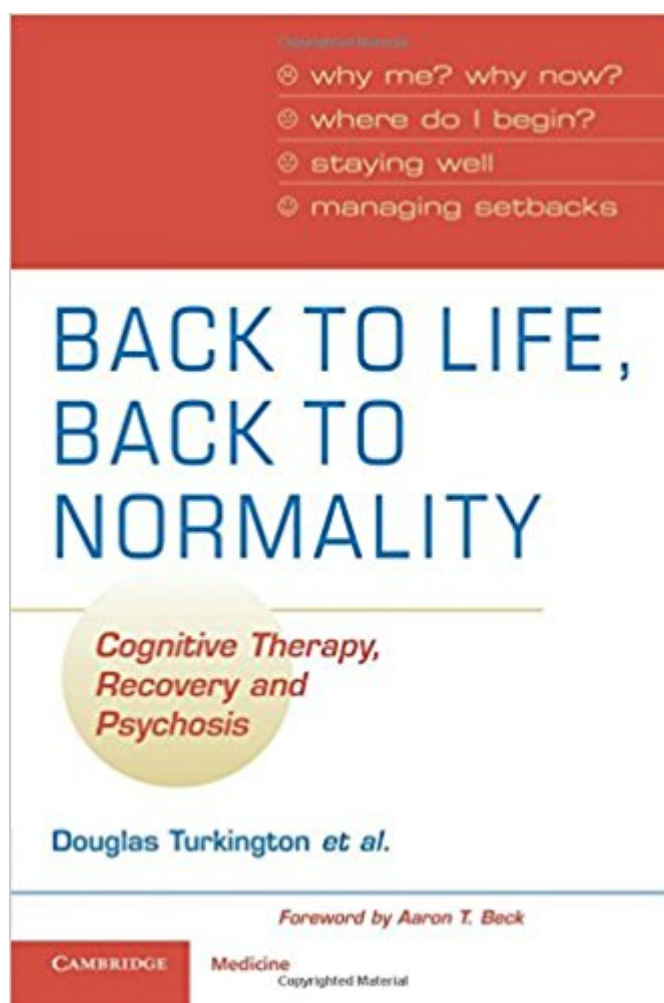


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# Back To Life, Back To Normality: Cognitive Therapy, Recovery And Psychosis



## Synopsis

Written specifically with sufferers and carers in mind, to help them understand and apply the basic concepts of cognitive therapy for psychosis. Illustrates what it is like to have common psychosis and how people's lives can be restored using therapy. Increases understanding of how the psychosis started, and the factors that worsen symptoms or increase the likelihood of relapse. Helps the sufferer learn how to control symptoms and delay or prevent relapse. Includes features and exercises to help sufferers explore their own beliefs and feelings to reflect on the way they cope. Helps carers know what to say and what to do. Provides a resource for mental health professionals working with patients, to introduce the approach, support ongoing therapy and make the most efficient use of appointment time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Presents useful psychoeducation about psychotic symptoms and also includes a helpful discussion about when 'normal' perceptions and beliefs become maladaptive and impairing....There is much to like about this book from the perspective of a CBTp therapist, and it has the potential to be a valuable resource for patients in therapy and their caregivers." --PsycCritiques, APA Review of Books

This book provides a resource for mental health professionals working with patients, to introduce the

approach of cognitive therapy for psychosis, support ongoing therapy and make the most efficient use of appointment time. Helps sufferers learn how to control symptoms and delay or prevent relapse.

In my long search to return to normality, I thought this book would be part of the answer. It is not and doesn't support much of what I was looking for. I have trouble talking after psychosis and I thought it would be covered in this book as it is a major aspect of people experiencing the after effects of psychosis. I haven't found the answers on the internet for that matter either. Maybe it's bad research, but I would think that a book trying to get people back to normal would mention something in the realms of what I was looking for. If you want suggestions on how to break down your thoughts to have more positive ones, then this is your book. Don't go here if your looking to regain your old self back.

Very practical book for care givers, for people with love ones who is coping with psychotic experiences. Very readable and down to earth.

While the numerous authors of this book do not publish any credentials, the book is endorsed by Aaron T. Beck. M.D. Presumably, their expertise is based on technical study and experience. This is reasonable, in my opinion, because cognitive behavior therapy seems to be really more of an art than a science. The authors focus a lot on de-stigmatizing mental illness. In fact, they have written this book especially for persons with mental illness - who suffer anything from stress disorders to schizophrenia - and for their caregivers. After all, even schizophrenia is just another illness that can be treated with medication and cognitive behavior therapy. The book is full of case histories and examples of how to deal with specific problems - such as hearing voices. Medication management, both pills and injections are also well covered. Even advise for using the book to assist professional and other caregivers, helping to keep them straight and steady. Thoughts, behavior, and feelings are discussed in very practical ways, as is vulnerability and cognition. The nature of emotional events causing the blocking of cognition and other problems are thoroughly discussed (some even diagrammed). I would certainly recommend this book to anyone suffering from mental health problems, lay persons who take care of someone afflicted with mental illness, and people who just want to know how to handle difficult people.

To provide a baseline on my perspective, I have no formal education in psychology, psychiatry, or

medicine, but I am overeducated in general and I have an immediate family member who has had severe unipolar depression with psychotic episodes for the last 12 years. So I am pretty knowledgeable on psychosis for a layperson, but by no means a mental health professional. I'll say right off the bat that this book is really going to be of interest to people who have experienced or are experiencing psychotic episodes or disorders, their caregivers, and healthcare professionals, and probably not anyone else. It is a pretty concrete how-to sort of book, not a general background text on psychosis. This is also a book which is focused on therapy, recovery, and maintaining recovery; it is not a crisis intervention manual. If you have a loved one who is in the psychiatric unit at city hospital on a 72-hour hold because they tried to commit suicide, this is not a book to bring them in the hospital, or for you to read while they're in the hospital. This is more of a book to read after the crisis has passed and the patient is stabilized but not back to functioning as well as they did before the crisis, as part of a program to achieve as full a recovery as possible. In that light, I think it could be quite helpful and is somewhat unique among books on psychosis. Cognitive therapy basically deals with the linkage between our thoughts and what we do in response to those thoughts, and how all this affects our experience of the world around us. So there is a lot of focus on identifying specifically what you are thinking, how that makes you feel, what you do in response to those feelings, and whether that chain results in outcomes that are positive for you. If the outcomes are not positive, then a big part of cognitive therapy involves identifying ways of changing your thoughts, changing the feelings you experience as a result of your thoughts, and changing the actions you take in response to those feelings, to produce more positive outcomes for your life. The book provides a set of questions, exercises, and checklists for self-application of cognitive therapy techniques to situations and symptoms common to many psychotic disorders, including paranoia, hearing voices, delusions, etc. It also deals with antipsychotic medications and decisions about continuing or discontinuing their use. There is a chapter specifically advising caregivers, as well. Each chapter follows a somewhat similar structure, opening with some background on the chapter topic, as well as some "normalizing" information (for example, paranoia is something that everyone experiences, and depending on the situation and degree of the paranoia is not necessarily a psychotic symptom...being afraid to ride the subway at midnight carrying a large sack of cash is a lot different than being afraid to walk down the driveway to the mailbox because you think your mailman wants to kill you). If you're familiar with "The Feeling Good Handbook" or "A Guide to Rational Living," then the checklists and exercises in "Back to Life" will seem very familiar to you. The key difference is that the two former books provide a set of tools for applying cognitive behavioral therapy for the "average" person experiencing problems which may be stressful and

trying (marital problems, anxiety about your job, feelings of inadequacy, mild depression, etc.) but are not necessarily related to any sort of neurobiological disorder (e.g., bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.). This book is a guide to applying these tools for people who are experiencing psychotic episodes. So whereas an example problem from "The Feeling Good Handbook" might be "I don't like to go out in public because I'm extremely overweight and every time people look at me I feel like they're thinking about how fat I am," this book might have an example such as "I don't like to go out in public because every time someone looks at me I believe they are an agent of the sinister government conspiracy against me." Although the level of the material is pretty accessible to a layperson, if you are approaching it as an absolute beginner you will probably want to supplement it with some general reading on specific mood or thought disorders, since the book really focuses mostly on responding to various symptoms common in psychosis rather than giving a lot of background on mental illnesses. The book is written by British doctors, which is obvious from the tone and colloquialisms, although I think there is nothing that the average American reader would have issues with. It does, however, mean that some of the specific information about services that are available (such as advance care directives and crisis intervention teams) may not apply in other countries (such as the USA, where procedures and services vary considerably from state to state, and even within states by county or city).

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