Microcomputers: Clinical Applications

Does the term microcomputer send you into a frenzy? Are you mystified by the words microchip, hardware, firmware, and peripheral? If so, then you will find Microcomputers: Clinical Applications a valuable resource.

This 72-page handbook, to be used in management and clinical settings, introduces occupational therapists to the world of microcomputers. It reviews microcomputers made by several manufacturers, such as Apple, TRS, and IBM, and includes a thorough software review form that lists and describes the characteristics one should evaluate when reviewing software.

Also included is a detailed chapter on management information systems. Justifications for microcomputers, an example of a cost/benefit analysis, and an implementation plan for adding a computer to an occupational therapy department are discussed. Examples of management as well as clinical interventions are listed.

Of particular interest is a chapter on keyboard replacements and enhancers, which describes many devices that are helpful when working with people with physical disabilities. Among these devices are Scan Writers—equipment that allows disabled individuals to access computers using little or no motor activity—and other modifications to the microcomputer such as a Videx Enhancer and Adaptive Firmware Cards.

Several chapters are devoted to the use of microcomputers in a clinical setting. Computer intervention was used in hemianopsia and visual field cut remediation in a research project conducted at Schwab Rehabilitation Center. As a result of intervention, patients demonstrated improvement with increased awareness of the left visual field and were able to compensate for left-sided neglect. In two case studies involving hand trauma, patients showed significant improvement in hand dexterity after computer intervention. It should be remembered, however, that the studies presented were done on small populations. Further research with controls and larger populations is needed to validate computer intervention.

The excellent appendix lists manufacturers and distributors of instructional software, clinical management software, peripherals, and components to enhance a microcomputer.

I recommend this book as an introduction to the world of microcomputers for the professional who has had very little or no experience with them.

Laurie Knutsen, OTR

Stress Inoculation Training: Psychology Practitioner Guidebooks

Stress management seems to be a major focus of study in the health field. One book or workshop may present a single technique of stress reduction and prevention whereas another may promote the use of many techniques and appear to lack organization or a firm conceptual framework. Meichenbaum provides an integrative framework called Stress Inoculation Training (SIT) that offers clinicians a well thought-out, systematic approach to designing a stress reduction program for an individual or a specific population. The implementation of his method allows for flexibility but is specific enough to be used with many clinical and nonclinical groups. Used in conjunction with other treatments, SIT enhances the clinician’s tools.

In this book, stress is viewed as a dynamic relationship between the individual and his or her environment. Behavior, cognition, and the roles of others are looked at in terms of how they affect the individual’s stress level and ability to cope with stress. The client’s collaboration is seen as vital to the development of the rapport between client and therapist that has been found to be essential to successful outcomes.

Three phases of SIT are identified: (a) conceptualization, (b) skills acquisition and rehearsal, and (c) application and follow-through. A separate chapter is devoted to each phase. All chapters provide extensive discussion as well as valuable examples of ideas for implementation and the various reactions one may expect from clients.

Meichenbaum stresses the importance of diversity and flexibility when tailoring a program for an individual. He advocates graded exposure to stress to facilitate growth in the client’s self-confidence and feelings of hopefulness, control, commitment, and personal responsibility.

Finally, he addresses the application of SIT in a variety of settings. It should be noted that he provides many references throughout the book to support his hypotheses.

The book offers an organized framework on which to base stress management programs that appear relevant to occupational therapists from a variety of settings as well as to other health professionals. A systematic approach to facilitating organization of a treatment process is welcome and is particularly needed at this time.

Sarah T. Skinner, OTR/L

Your Down's Syndrome Child: Everything Today's Parents Need to Know About Raising Their Special Child

The intent of this book is to provide a handbook of practical information and advice to the parents of children with Down's syndrome. The author easily meets that goal. The book is extensive and factual, providing information to assist parents in raising their Down's syndrome child. It begins with the parents' first knowledge of the diagnosis of Down's syndrome, either at the time of amniocentesis or at birth, and follows through the stages of childhood and adulthood.

Chapters devoted to stages of development provide subheadings that deal with a wide variety of topics per...