

Video news

A quiet time for new video tape titles. This month we review a video tape on Stress Management available from High Street shops and therefore likely to be bought by many patients. This tape underlines the poor quality of much self-help audio visual material for patients, but does give us a glimpse of a possible future growth area: a series of authoritative appealingly presented video tapes on a range of mental health matters widely available through High Street outlets for hire or sale? Let us hope the tape reviewed is not a taste of future quality standards.

Also reviewed are a selection of video tapes on psychotherapy. I would add that we are very short of reviewers for specialty topics, so if you are interested in contributing, please let me know.

Finally, some news about a pilot project organised by Dr Andrew Macaulay aimed at providing a quarterly news and educational service for psychiatrists. This will be available by satellite transmission or overland by video tape. He plans to include a short report from quarterly conferences, updates on topics for MRCPsych candidates, and a music slot that will presumably explain itself in due course. More information is available from Dr Macaulay, Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, Berkshire. This development in embryo should be of particular interest to psychiatric tutors. It is due to start early 1990, and will be critically reviewed by this column in due course.

NICHOLAS ROSE

Tape reviews

Stress management

The repetitive title of this video tape, *Stress: How it can be controlled and managed*, was a hallmark of this production. Why controlled 'and' managed?

The first part of the video was confusing and alarming. Confusing because talking head after talking head gave an idiosyncratic view of stress, without the luxury of graphics to clarify the difficult concept of physiological anxiety. Alarming because of the abundant descriptions of the physiological consequences of stress: "heart attack" and "nervous breakdown" in particular. Yet, halfway through, there was still no indication of how stress "can be controlled and managed", just the promise of a chance to learn many management techniques. This was an exaggeration as the management section was superficial and only one technique, that of relaxation, was dealt with – although in a variety of forms

ranging from the quasi-medical to the mystical. Finally, brief reference was given to organisational development schemes at work: not of great use to my typical anxiety management patient who is more likely to be a stressed mum than a manager at a Shell Petroleum works.

In summary, this is a poorly produced and rambling production which is of little practical use. The 58 minutes could have been better used to teach a sound relaxation exercise.

HELEN KENNERLEY

Psychotherapy skills

Videos provide an excellent opportunity to learn non-behavioural psychotherapy skills by watching and hopefully understanding. Surprisingly, there are only a few titles available; presumably others exist, although they are not made available for general distribution. I cannot pretend that I have been able to review every single tape on the subject. The tapes that I have reviewed, however, are of a reasonable technical standard and all seem to follow a remarkably similar format.

Gloria: This is a well known tape which was produced in 1965. It is now one of the series produced by Psychological Films Inc. In this tape, which was originally produced on 16 mm film, there is a brief introduction and a sales pitch suggesting that you might like to buy some of the books produced by the therapists.

An introduction by Carl Rogers to his client-centred therapy follows and we see him at work with the patient called Gloria. At the end of this interview he summarises the session.

We then see subsequent interviews following exactly the same format with Drs Perils and Ellis. Perhaps it is a prejudice of mine, but I felt that Dr Perils lost a certain amount of street credibility by displaying his own addictive behaviour. I am not sure that we would want to suggest to the novice psychotherapist that smoking was acceptable behaviour. The final interview with Dr Ellis describes "rational-emotive therapy" and the tape concludes with an evaluation by the patient herself of her experiences with the three therapists. This is quite illuminating and she suggests that each interview had enabled her to get in touch with different aspects of her personality and difficulties.

I have used this tape in teaching and it has been my practice to stop the tape at certain points and ask the small group what they thought about some particular aspect. On the whole this has been well received and the students say that it is a valuable exercise.

As to the content and role model aspects of this tape, I think that Dr Rogers appears to be both supportive and "warm" – an archetype of psychotherapy. Dr Perils is quite confronting and demonstrates the style of psychotherapy that may only be suited to a limited number of patients with a well defined ego. It is also clear that he used his charismatic style to carry the interview forward. The consultation with Dr Ellis concentrates on the "thinking" part of the self. Personally I did not think that this was a particularly good interview. Watching the tape, one senses that the patient is not really convinced and that the comments and interpretations say more about the therapist.

Kathy: The second tape in this series follows the same format. This time the patient is called Kathy and the therapists concerned are Drs Rogers, Shostom and Lazarus. This programme was made in 1977 and the production style is similar to *Gloria*, although it was recorded directly onto video tape.

Richard: This third tape was made in 1987 and follows the format of the other two. This time the patient is seen for psychodynamic psychotherapy, cognitive behaviour modification and cognitive therapy. The therapists are Drs Hans Strup, Donald Meichenbaum and Beck.

These three tapes certainly come into the recommended category and are suitable for a multi-disciplinary audience. In spite of the recorded introductions and summaries, I think that the tapes are of limited use for self-teaching. My judgement would be that some of the techniques are not particularly suitable for the novice psychotherapist, more explanation would be of value for such an audience. As the recordings are of acknowledged world experts, the tapes are an invaluable resource.

Interview with Jean: Since I was involved in the production of both this tape and the one that follows, I will only briefly describe their content. Their ratings given at the end of this column have been provided by another independent psychiatrist. In the tape, Jean is an in-patient in a psychiatric hospital and has been referred for an assessment interview for individual psychotherapy. The programme format is straightforward, starting with a caption that briefly sets the scene. Throughout the tape, the interview is sub-captioned with brief comments and this has been designed to alert the student to some particular aspect of consultation.

Saying Goodbye – A Psychotherapeutic Approach: is a 9 minute segment of the same interview in which the issue of loss in the guise of a member of staff leaving and the effect on the patient, is explored. It is re-edited and captioned to be suitable for a more general audience with little or no knowledge of psychotherapy.

Conversational Model of Psychotherapy: The tapes I have discussed so far all show examples of experts at work and as such provide an important teaching resource. A *Conversational Model of Psychotherapy: A Teaching Method*, is a series of three tapes that have been produced by the University Hospital of South Manchester. The package offers systematic methods of teaching basic psychotherapeutic skills to mental health professionals. The first tape entitled Basic Psychotherapeutic Skills shows four therapists seeing patients and shows examples of the basic skills used. The second tape, Developing a Therapeutic Conversation, builds on these skills, showing how they can possibly be combined in the psychotherapeutic situation. The third tape is entitled Structured Teaching of Psychotherapy and the content of the programme consists of psychotherapeutic interviews.

All the programmes described are of a reasonable technical standard and are available from a number of different sources. They are all of value to the specialist audience but, with the exception of the Manchester University tapes, are only illustrative material. Any students would need the guidance and supervision of a more experienced clinician. The production styles are unremarkable. Perhaps as video becomes more firmly established as a legitimate teaching medium, more funds would allow for more stimulating programmes to be made that educate rather than just illustrate.

ANDREW MACAULAY

Tape details

ratings	audience
*** highly recommended	P psychiatrists
** recommended	M multi-disciplinary
* worth looking at	UG undergraduate
o no rating	PG postgraduate

Stress: How it can be controlled and managed

Production/distribution: British Medical Television, BCI House, Caxton Way, Watford, Herts WD1 8UF
 Details: Video; 1989. 58 mins; £7.99
 Rating/audience: °, Patients.

Three Approaches to Psychotherapy: Gloria; Kathy; Richard

Production: British Association of Counselling
 Distributor: Concord (sale/hire) 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9BJ