The Handbook of Developmental Psychopathology presents cutting-edge theory and research in the field of developmental psychopathology; as such, it is one of the primary resources for the field. It has been 10 years since the publication of the second edition of the Handbook. During this time, there has been a burgeoning of work in the field of developmental psychopathology. The dynamic nature of the field necessitates an updated volume that considers advancements in theory, research methodology, and empirical findings.

The first edition of the Handbook sought to combine the fields of developmental science and psychopathology, arguing that the origins of psychopathology in adulthood could be found in childhood. A primary focus was placed on traditional psychiatric diagnostic schemes, drawn primarily from adult psychiatry, to parse the field of psychopathology into particular disorders. As the field grew, emphasis changed from a primary focus on diagnostic categories to a focus on developmental perspectives on the emergence and growth of psychopathology. This shift in emphasis required a more comprehensive volume that considered multiple perspectives on psychopathology as reflected in biological, psychological, and contextual frameworks. The second edition met this challenge by supplementing descriptions of the presentation, course, and etiology of particular disorders with chapters devoted to varying conceptual paradigms, such as biological, cognitive, social, and ecological perspectives. This edition underscored the idea that psychopathology cannot merely be viewed in terms of developing individual characteristics but also must be considered within the dynamic framework of shifts in children’s developmental contexts across the life span.

Since the publication of the second edition, the field has continued to mature such that theory and research emphasize not only the importance of understanding varying levels of development but also the need for integrative multilevel models reflecting interactions and transactions among multiple vulnerabilities, risks, and protective factors that shape development trajectories of health and psychopathology. Perhaps one of the fastest growing areas of the field in recent years is the intersection of neuroscience and psychopathology. This rapid growth is reflected in recent research on molecular genetics and epigenetics, brain imaging, and the role of early experience in the development of biological systems. Cutting-edge developments in this area are reflected in two new chapters, with an eye toward considering how developing biological systems are influenced by, and influence, psychological and social processes underlying risk for psychopathology. Also reflecting this
interface between biology and context, new chapters include a focus on the
effect of early deprivation on cognitive, emotional, and biological systems
and on the role of pubertal development in psychopathology. Another grow-
ing area in the field is a greater integration of theory and research on early
temperament, personality, and psychopathology, as well as new work explor-
ing early indicators of personality pathology during childhood and adoles-
cence. A third area of rapid growth is the development of sophisticated
statistical procedures for tracking change, allowing for a more nuanced
understanding of continuity and change in psychopathology over time; these
advances are reflected in a chapter on research methodology. Providing a bal-
anced view of the field, this edition considers processes underlying resilience
from psychopathology in high-risk youth, with an integration of contempo-
rary theory and research on positive psychology. The sections on specific
disorders are updated and expanded to include chapters on substance use and
suicide. In sum, the third edition strives to retain the strengths of the earlier
editions while integrating state-of-the-art theory and empirical research that
reflect contemporary multidisciplinary perspectives on developmental
psychopathology.

This edition is divided into nine Parts. The first concerns general issues
and theories. The second focuses on environmental contexts, including fam-
ily, schooling, peers, life stress, and culture. The third Part brings together
cutting-edge work on individual-level processes involved in psychopathol-
ogy, including genetics and neuroscience, the interactive role of early experi-
ence and biology, as well as temperament and pubertal development. The
next three Parts focus on specific disorders, including early childhood disor-
ders, disruptive behavior disorders (ADHD, aggression, conduct problems),
and emotional disorders (depression, suicide, anxiety, and obsessions and
compulsions). Control disorders are presented in the seventh Part. Part 8,
Chronic Developmental Disorders, includes chapters on autism spectrum
disorders, intellectual disability, gender dysphoria, and personality patholo-
gies. Last, Part 9 covers Trauma Disorders, including maltreatment, posttrau-
matic stress, and dissociative disorders.

Finally, a word in regard to the new DSM manual. Although the first edi-
tion of the Handbook utilized the DSM classification system, the second edi-
tion of the Handbook moved more toward a developmental perspective. This
emphasis has continued in this third edition. When necessary, the new and
revised chapters have taken the new DSM manual into account. The commit-
ment of the NIMH to move the field of psychopathology from symptom-
based toward a more dynamic classification system mirrors our belief that a
more research-oriented system of psychopathology is especially relevant to
studying the development of psychopathology.

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