

SIUE's Professor Hupp Calls Out Pseudoscience in Therapy with New Book

by Kalli Collins

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EDWARDSVILLE –Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Stephen Hupp, PhD, professor in the Department of Psychology, teamed up with science communicator, Cara Santa Maria, to publish a new book called *Pseudoscience in Therapy: A Skeptical Field Guide*.



“I was excited to collaborate with Cara Santa Maria because she’s a leader in teaching critical thinking skills to the public,” said Hupp. “She cohosts the *Skeptics Guide to the Universe* podcast, and the show *Jeopardy* even recently had a whole category based on her other podcast, *Talk Nerdy*.”

Over the last several decades, professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA) have been identifying effective treatments for major psychological diagnoses such as mood disorders and anxiety disorders. Even though great strides have been made, questionable approaches continue to infiltrate therapy.

“We should be engaging in honest discussions about not only what works, but also what doesn’t work,” said Santa Maria in the first chapter. “Truth be told, the mental health field has a long history of dubious claims, quack practitioners, and downright dangerous pseudoscience among its ranks.”

For example, the book calls out therapies such as bee sting therapy for depression and crystal healing for anxiety. The book identifies over one hundred problematic therapy techniques.

“Pseudoscience, fringe science and mental health malarkey are much more pervasive than people realize,” said Hupp. “Fortunately, we do have a good idea about what actually works for most disorders – the trick is helping people learn to tell the difference between science and pseudoscience.”

Hupp also teaches about the distinction between science and pseudoscience through his course offerings including Pseudoscience in Psychology and Exploring Strange Things which cover critical thinking about other topics including Bigfoot, UFOs, and extrasensory perception (ESP).

In addition to being a guide for looking up questionable treatments, each chapter in the book also identifies which treatments have strong research support. According to APA’s Society of Clinical Psychology, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based treatment for mood disorders, clinical anxiety and several other conditions.

For SIUE students experiencing mental health challenges, SIUE Counseling Services offers free support. The Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies also offers a “Find a CBT Therapist Directory” on their website services.abct.org/i4a/memberDirectory/index.cfm?directory_id=3&pageID=3282.

Published by Cambridge University Press, *Pseudoscience in Therapy* is available through many major book sellers including Amazon at [amazon.com/Pseudoscience-Therapy-Skeptical-Field-Guide/dp/1009005103/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr.](https://www.amazon.com/Pseudoscience-Therapy-Skeptical-Field-Guide/dp/1009005103/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr.)

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