

*Treatment for Children with Selective Mutism: An Integrative Behavioral Approach*  
Book by Bergman, R. Lindsey (2012)

Review by Carmen Lynas, Ph.D.

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Author and Researcher R. Lindsey Bergman, Ph.D., is an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA, Director of the Pediatric OCD Intensive Outpatient Program at Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital, and developer of the Selective Mutism Questionnaire (SMQ) and School Speech Questionnaire (SSQ). Bergman's treatment manual offers a tremendous resource to parents, teachers, and therapists alike.

The manual outlines Bergman's protocol consisting of 20 sessions over 24 weeks of treatment. Each session is described in detail, including scripts, template letters to use with schools, homework sheets, and other useful handouts. Additionally, Bergman provides the Selective Mutism Questionnaire (SMQ) and the School Speech Questionnaire (SSQ) in her manual. These measures can be used to assess baseline scores and treatment progress.

Bergman's protocol was developed over years of working with SM children at UCLA's Childhood OCD, Anxiety, and Tic Disorders Program. The resources provided for therapists makes this treatment manual a must-have for pediatric providers, especially those who would like to help SM children but don't know the best approach. Bergman's protocol is consistent with what meta-analytic reviews of SM treatment find to be most effective, including exposure-based therapy elements such as:

- hierarchy of exposures
- exposure with response prevention
- systematic desensitization
- stimulus fading
- contingent reinforcement of approximations of exposure goals
- parent and teacher education
- weekly homework focusing on exposures for the week, facilitating participation with parent and school

Parents looking for treatment for their child also benefit from Bergman's book. There are still many out-dated views about SM and treatment, and misinformation about how old a child needs to be to receive CBT treatment. Parents who read Bergman's book will learn what the gold standard is for SM treatment as of 2012 (as opposed to earlier years) and will become informed consumers when searching for a therapist. Likewise, educators who suspect a child has SM will be better armed with information on how to help the child effectively. They, too, will become better consumers on what resources will be essential in their school programs. And lastly, therapists and clinical supervisors who provide and teach CBT treatment will be pleased to know that Bergman's book concisely provides a therapeutic program that yields results, as well as a user-friendly manual from which to train budding psychotherapists.

Bergman's book will change the trajectory of SM treatment, providing a valuable resource especially to those who lack SM treatment specialists in their area.