

# [PDF] One Nation Under Therapy: How The Helping Culture Is Eroding Self-Reliance

Sally Satel, Christina Hoff Sommers - pdf download free book

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## Books Details:

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## Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** "Cancer patients who talk about their ordeal in therapy groups do *not* live longer," write Sommers (*Who Stole Feminism?*) and Satel (*P.C., M.D.*) in this suck-it-up polemic. For them, the pervasiveness of therapeutic thinking and practice in American life provides not healing catharsis but enervating psychic drag and evasion of responsibility. The authors marshal a litany of studies from a variety of perspectives, aiming to convince readers that taking one's lumps with as much equanimity as possible is far preferable to exploring one's feelings via an "unwholesome therapism"--or, worse, using one's "therapized" feelings as an excuse for bad behavior. Placing themselves in the tradition of Christopher Lasch and Allan Bloom, they begin with

"The Myth of the Fragile Child," decrying the creeping prohibitions on dodgeball and tag (seen by some as too aggressive and competitive) on the nation's playgrounds as coddling. The next chapter, "Esteem Thyself," takes direct aim at the ideas of Abraham Maslow and self-actualization advocate Carl Rogers, while the following chapters chronicle the descent from "Sin to Syndrome" and "Pathos to Pathology," and track the enforcement of "Emotional Correctness." While basically a one-note book with little grace in its description of its foes, or in its insistent call for taking responsibility for one's own actions, Sommers and Satel's jeremiad will likely generate debate.

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**From** Philosopher-turned-controversialist Sommers and psychiatrist Satel argue as forcibly against contemporary psychotherapeutic notions and nostrums as Sommers did against radical feminism in *Who Stole Feminism?* (1994) and *The War against Boys* (2000). The American Enterprise Institute colleagues question five pet doctrines of contemporary therapy by presenting the research evidence for and against them. That is, they review the relevant literature, letting its conclusions speak for themselves; though they are critical of the five shibboleths, they don't have to apply spin to be convincing. Properly conducted research doesn't, they show, back up the fashionable dogmas that (1) children are psychologically fragile and mustn't be stressed, (2) self-esteem is the sine qua non of psychological health, (3) what moralists call sins are expressions of mental illness, (4) the emotional effects of trauma must be acted out, and (5) all war and disaster witnesses suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Sure, some kids are hypersensitive, self-esteem isn't unimportant, PTSD is a real condition, and so forth. Folly and worse result, however, when the five dogmas are generalized as they are in current practice, a point Sommers and Satel drive home--anent dogmas 4 and 5, in particular--in the long sixth chapter, "September 11, 2001: The Mental Health Crisis That Wasn't." Well-written, well-informed public affairs argumentation. *Ray Olson*  
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