



# One Nation Under Therapy: How the Helping Culture Is Eroding Self-Reliance

*Christina Hoff Sommers, Sally, M.D. Satel*

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Americans have traditionally placed great value on self-reliance and fortitude. In recent decades, however, we have seen the rise of a therapeutic ethic that views Americans as emotionally underdeveloped, psychically frail, and requiring the ministrations of mental health professionals to cope with life's vicissitudes. Being "in touch with one's feelings" and freely expressing them have become paramount personal virtues. Today-with a book for every ailment, a counselor for every crisis, a lawsuit for every grievance, and a TV show for every conceivable problem-we are at risk of degrading our native ability to cope with life's challenges.

Drawing on established science and common sense, Christina Hoff Sommers and Dr. Sally Satel reveal how "therapism" and the burgeoning trauma industry have come to pervade our lives. Help is offered everywhere under the presumption that we need it: in children's classrooms, the workplace, churches, courtrooms, the media, the military. But with all the "help" comes a host of troubling consequences, including:

- \* The myth of stressed-out, homework-burdened, hypercompetitive, and depressed or suicidal schoolchildren in need of therapy and medication
- \* The loss of moral bearings in our approach to lying, crime, addiction, and other foibles and vices
- \* The unasked-for "grief counselors" who descend on bereaved families, schools, and communities following a tragedy, offering dubious advice while billing plenty of money
- \* The expansion of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from an affliction of war veterans to nearly everyone who has experienced a setback

Intelligent, provocative, and wryly amusing, *One Nation Under Therapy* demonstrates that "talking about" problems is no substitute for confronting them.

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