



American Therapy: The Rise of Psychotherapy in the United States

Jonathan Engel

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From Freud to Zoloff, the first comprehensive history of American psychotherapy.

Fifty percent of Americans will undergo some form of psychotherapy in their lifetimes, but the origins of the field are rarely known to patients. Yet the story of psychotherapy in America brims with colorful characters, intriguing experimental treatments, and intense debates within this community of healers.

American Therapy begins, as psychotherapy itself does, with the monumental figure of Sigmund Freud. The book outlines the basics of Freudian theory and discusses the peculiarly powerful influence of Freud on the world of American mental health. It then moves through the emergence of group therapy, the rise of psychosurgery, the evolution of uniquely American therapies such as Gestalt, rebirthing, and primal scream therapy, and concludes with the modern world of psychopharmacology, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and highly targeted short-term therapies.

For a counseled nation that freely uses terms such as “emotional baggage” and no longer stigmatizes mental health care, *American Therapy* is a remarkable history of an extraordinary enterprise.

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