

The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure by Greg Lukianoff, Jonathan Haidt

Something is going wrong on many college campuses in the last few years. Rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide are rising. Speakers are shouted down. Students and professors say they are walking on eggshells and afraid to speak honestly. How did this happen?

First Amendment expert Greg Lukianoff and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt show how the new problems on campus have their origins in three terrible ideas that have become increasingly woven into American childhood and education: what doesn't kill you makes you weaker; always trust your feelings; and life is a battle between good people and evil people. **These three Great Untruths** are incompatible with basic psychological principles, as well as ancient wisdom from many cultures. They interfere with healthy development. Anyone who embraces these untruths—and the resulting culture of safetyism—is less likely to become an autonomous adult able to navigate the bumpy road of life.

Lukianoff and Haidt investigate the many social trends that have intersected to produce these untruths. They situate the conflicts on campus in the context of America's rapidly rising political polarization, including a rise in hate crimes and off-campus provocation. They explore changes in childhood including the rise of fearful parenting, the decline of unsupervised play, and the new world of social media that has engulfed teenagers in the last decade.

“Each exercise helps him see his situation in a new light; each one weakens the grip of his emotions and prepares him to accept Lady Philosophy's ultimate lesson: “Nothing is miserable unless you think it so; and on the other hand, nothing brings happiness unless you are content with it.” 5”

“that the culture of safetyism is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of human nature and of the dynamics of trauma and recovery. It is vital that people who have survived violence become habituated to ordinary cues and”



“reminders woven into the fabric of daily life. 31 Avoiding triggers is a symptom of PTSD, not a treatment for it. According to Richard McNally, the director of clinical training in Harvard’s Department of Psychology:”

The rider and the elephant

How to control the elephant? How to break the cycle between the negative emotions and beliefs “Typically, the rider does his job without objection, but the rider has some ability to talk back to the elephant, particularly if he can learn to speak the elephant’s language, which is a language of intuition rather than logic. If the rider can reframe a situation so that the elephant sees it in a new way, then”


If you can get people to examine their beliefs and consider counter evidence ideas

“But it is possible to train people to learn **Beck’s** method so they can question their automatic thoughts on their own, every day. With repetition, over a period of weeks or months, people can change their schemas and create different, more helpful habitual beliefs (such as “I can handle most challenges” or “I have friends I can” “trust”). With CBT, there is no need to spend years talking about one’s childhood. The evidence that CBT works is overwhelming. 7 A common finding is that CBT works about as well as Prozac and similar drugs for relieving the symptoms of anxiety disorders and mild to moderate depression, 8 and it does so with longer-lasting benefits and without”

“What Is CBT? Cognitive behavioral therapy was developed in the 1960s by Aaron Beck, a psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania. At the time, Freudian”

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?





Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a form of psychological treatment that has been demonstrated to be effective for a range of problems including depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug use problems, marital problems, eating disorders, and severe mental illness. Numerous research studies suggest that CBT leads to significant improvement in functioning and quality of life. In many studies, CBT has been demonstrated to be as effective as, or more effective than, other forms of psychological therapy or psychiatric medications.

It is important to emphasize that advances in CBT have been made on the basis of both research and clinical practice. Indeed, CBT is an approach for which there is ample scientific evidence that the methods that have been developed actually produce change. In this manner, CBT differs from many other forms of psychological treatment.

CBT is based on several core principles, including:

1. Psychological problems are based, in part, on faulty or unhelpful ways of thinking.
2. Psychological problems are based, in part, on learned patterns of unhelpful behavior.
3. People suffering from psychological problems can learn better ways of coping with them, thereby relieving their symptoms and becoming more effective in their lives.


CBT treatment usually involves efforts to change thinking patterns. These strategies might include:

- Learning to recognize one's distortions in thinking that are creating problems, and then to reevaluate them in light of reality.
- Gaining a better understanding of the behavior and motivation of others.
- Using problem-solving skills to cope with difficult situations.
- Learning to develop a greater sense of confidence in one's own abilities.

CBT treatment also usually involves efforts to change behavioral patterns. These strategies might include:

- Facing one's fears instead of avoiding them.
- Using role playing to prepare for potentially problematic interactions with others.
- Learning to calm one's mind and relax one's body.





Not all CBT will use all of these strategies. Rather, the psychologist and patient/client work together, in a collaborative fashion, to develop an understanding of the problem and to develop a treatment strategy. CBT places an emphasis on helping individuals learn to be their own therapists. Through exercises in the session as well as “homework” exercises outside of sessions, patients/clients are helped to develop coping skills, whereby they can learn to change their own thinking, problematic emotions, and behavior.

CBT therapists emphasize what is going on in the person’s current life, rather than what has led up to their difficulties. A certain amount of information about one’s history is needed, but the focus is primarily on moving forward in time to develop more effective ways of coping with life. Source: APA Div. 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology)

