

Using Conversational AI for Emotional Support Ethical Considerations

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Create Knowledge.**

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TRIGGER WARNING



Streit über Honorare

Psychotherapeuten verdienen bald 4,5 Prozent weniger und laufen jetzt Sturm

Niedergelassene Psychotherapeuten bekommen ab April weniger Geld. Das hat kurzerhand ein Ausschuss entschieden – gegen den Willen der Ärztevertretung. Das Nachsehen hätten vor allem die Patienten.

Von **Swantje Unterberg**

13.03.2026, 16.21 Uhr



6 Min



Kürzungen bei Psychotherapie

Weniger Honorar trotz fehlender Plätze

Stand: 25.03.2026 • 11:22 Uhr

Patienten warten oft monatelang auf einen Therapieplatz. Nun könnte sich die Lage weiter verschärfen. Die Krankenkassen kürzen Honorare - und begründen das mit zuletzt gestiegenen Vergütungen.

SPIEGEL 2026 (<https://www.spiegel.de/...>)

What makes AI Chatbots an Attractive Alternative?



available



no waiting list



no judgement



Tagesschau (28.04.2026) <https://www.instagram.com/...>
BBC (2025) <https://www.bbc.com/...>

How is Conversational AI defined?

How is CAI defined?



 Claude

 ChatGPT

 Gemini

History of CAI

Rule-Based Systems

1966

```
EEEEEE LL IIII ZZZZZZ AAAAA  
EE LL II ZZ AA AA  
EEEE LL II ZZZ AAAAAA  
EE LL II ZZ AA AA  
EEEE LLLLL IIII ZZZZZZ AA AA
```

Machine Learning

1995



Deep Learning

2016



2017



Large Language Models

2022



Benefits vs. Limitations

Clinical Benefits of CAI

Depression: $p = 0.001$, $d = 0.75^a$
Anxiety: $p = 0.002$, $d = 0.72^a$



"The chatbot understood my feelings when I was upset."

Benefits of CAI



ACCESSIBILITY^a



"Wysa helps talk me through without all the added, unhelpful and unnecessary human reactions, judgments and passive projections"^c



STIGMA^{b,c}



no judgement

TRIGGER WARNING

Problems & Potential Harm

- Limited understanding of complex human emotional situations^{a,b}
- Misses nuances (e.g. sarcasm, cultural context)^a
- Poor contextualization^{c,d}
- Risk of harmful or misleading responses^{a,c,e,f}



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- Inadequate handling of crisis situations^{a,g}



“Rest easy king”: See the messages ChatGPT sent a young man who took his own life



Problems & Potential Harm

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- Poor contextualization^{c,d}
- Risk of harmful or misleading responses^{a,c,e,f}
- Inadequate handling of crisis situations^{a,g}
- **Vulnerable groups face higher risks^{d,h}**



What Ethical Risks arise from using Conversational AI for Emotional Support?

Safety

Privacy

Bias & Discrimination

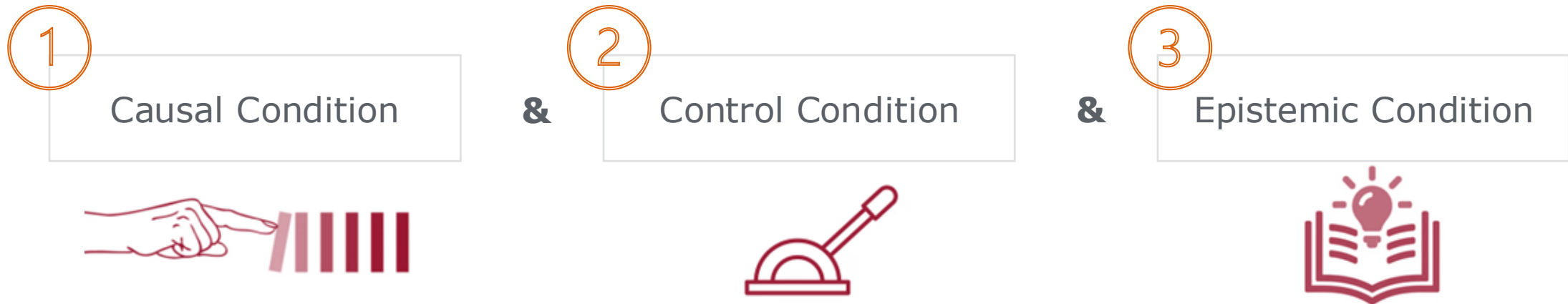
Emotional Dependency

Accountability

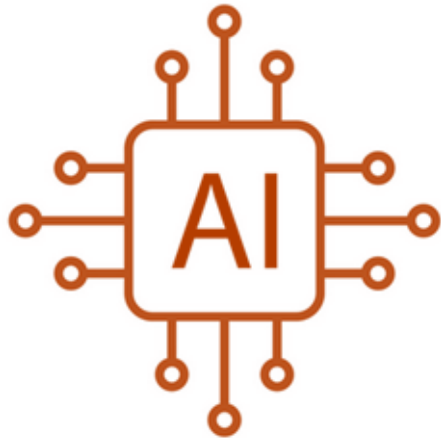
Who should be held responsible if CAI causes harm?

Moral Responsibility

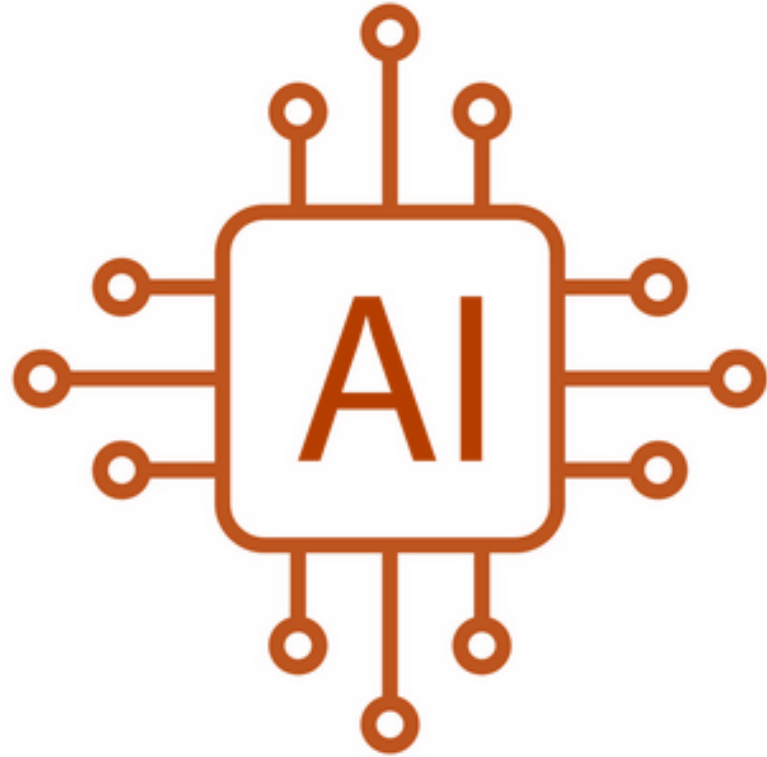
Agency



Responsibility Gap



Responsibility Gap



Responsibility Gap



Responsibility Gap



Discussion

What is your ethical opinion?

**Who should be held
responsible?**

**What possible solutions could
you think of?**

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