

# A CRITICAL LOOK at the MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

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*“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.”*

- Krishnamurti

The goal of this leaflet is to alert people to the dangers of mainstream psychiatry, to the increased use of psychiatric drugs and their dangers, and to the problematic foundations of the ‘mental health’ system more generally.

## What is the goal of the mental health system?

The goal of the state mental health system is supposedly to help people – young and old – to overcome emotional distress and achieve optimum ‘mental health’. Unfortunately, however, some of the mental health campaigns and organisations may be doing more harm than good – for two reasons.

Firstly, these organisations often *implicitly endorse the use of psychiatric drugs* – whose dangers are well-documented but not sufficiently well-known.

Secondly, they tend to *pathologize behaviour which is entirely natural* and expected in day-to-day living. Natural human quirks and idiosyncracies are being flagged as signs of ‘mental illness’ - and heavy-handed mental health interventions and diagnoses are increasingly being performed at a young age.

There is an implicit promotion of ‘mental hygiene’. This should concern anyone who genuinely cares about freedom and wants to defend diversity of thought and behaviour.

## ‘Mental hygiene’ laws and the homeless

Legislators in New York, US are (as of 2022) targetting homeless people with mental health laws[1][2]. The new policies allow police and social workers to more easily incarcerate the homeless and subject them to psychiatric treatment against their will – under the pretext that they have a ‘mental illness’ which prevents them from looking after their own basic needs.

In this way psychiatry and the law project themselves on the most vulnerable members of society, and – as if their circumstances weren’t harrowing enough already – subject them to the mortal terror of the psychiatric ward or the limbo of involuntary ‘outpatient treatment’.

As one observer noted, ‘ ... despite claims of empathy and care, these laws are about removing visible signs of homelessness and poverty from the streets’ [1].

## The Mental Health System in Ireland

The afore-mentioned events are happening in America, but trends in Ireland are also worrying. We can witness a creeping preoccupation with ‘mental hygiene’ in various aspects of life – whereby the slightest anomalies of thought, character or behaviour are used as grounds for concern over ‘mental illness’ or ‘biochemical imbalances’. Ironically, this is *anything but healthy*.

A related topic is the increasing use of anti-depressants and other psychiatric drugs.

### Antidepressant usage

Prescriptions for anti-depressants in children and teenagers has risen dramatically in Ireland over the last two decades[3][4]. The serious risks associated with these drugs are being downplayed and vital information about dangerous side effects withheld or not suitably conveyed – while their alleged therapeutic value is grossly overstated.

While the College of Psychiatrists in Ireland laud this development (unsurprisingly), the IACP (The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) advocate ‘therapeutic’ (rather than medication-based) interventions. Both of these groups are more interested in protecting their own guild interests, however, and largely miss the point.

While counsellors and psychotherapists are well-justified in cautioning against the use of psychiatric medications, they shouldn’t tout their ‘therapy’ as a panacea for emotional distress either.

### Mental illness or normal response to life troubles?

Both psychiatrists and therapists typically fail to ask a fundamental question ...

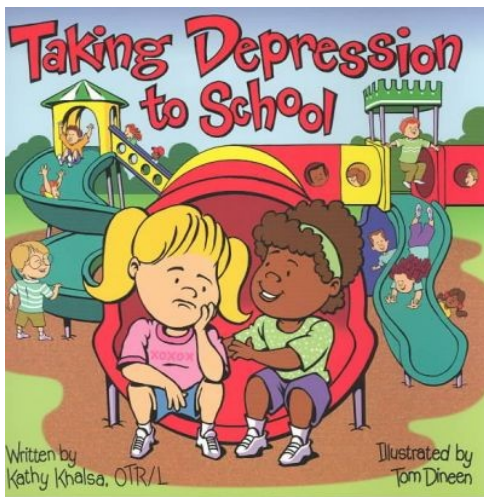


Figure 1: This booklet - directed at 5-11 year olds - was listed on the CAMHS reading list, and contains copious references to ‘medication’ and ‘pills’. This is part of a concerted effort to normalize the administering of psychiatric drugs to children and adolescents.

How can we expect to see an emotionally healthy population with an optimistic outlook on life when the news is almost always about housing crises, wars, mass shootings, pandemics, mass layoffs, a pending recession, *etc.*? How can we expect people to maintain a positive disposition in the face of endless bad news and difficulties?

Of course we can't. It doesn't make sense! Yet a core premise of mainstream psychiatry is that emotional distress (e.g. depression) is due to *internal* rather than external causes – that it is due to problems (e.g. a 'chemical imbalance') *within the person themselves*. This proposition is nonsensical.

The way in which mainstream psychiatry and the state mental health system exploit and capitalize on this natural response of people to a stressful and unhealthy social environment is repulsive.

***“Poverty, unemployment, and the loss of loved ones can make people depressed, and these social and situational causes of depression can not be changed by drugs.”[5]***

- Irving Kirsch

*The Emperor's New Drugs*

## **Are antidepressants really 'safe and effective'?**

Given the widespread promotion and defense of anti-depressants and other psychiatric drugs by vested interests, it is worth mentioning them again briefly before finishing.

The public are fed a story that antidepressants (such as SSRIs and SNRIs) correct a 'chemical imbalance' in the brain – and thereby help to manage a person's feelings of sadness or depression. Trying to dismantle this myth and discuss the dangers of psychiatric drugs – not only anti-depressants but also 'neuroleptics' – is not feasible in this short leaflet. But here are some quotes from others that might make people think twice about them.

***“This research in no way bolsters the idea that psychiatric drugs correct imbalances. Rather, it shows that psychiatric drugs create imbalances.”[6]***

- Breggin and Cohen

*Your Drug May Be Your Problem*

***“In modern psychiatric treatment, we take the single most complicated known creation in the universe – the human brain – and pour drugs into it in the hope of 'improving' its function.”***

***“Neuroleptic drugs ... are generally thought to have greatly helped the victims of schizophrenia. In reality they have not helped, but have immeasurably harmed all the people with this diagnosis. The harm is twofold: first, because of direct damage to the brain and to mental functions; second, because they are tied together with false and abhorrent views of human problems and human beings.”[7]***

- Lars Martensson

*Should Neuroleptic drugs be banned?*

## Summary

Intense emotions and feelings are not signs of ‘mental illness’; they are very often just a normal reaction to stressful circumstances and life challenges.

There is little or no scientific evidence to justify or support the use of psychiatric drugs in the vast majority of cases of emotional distress or erratic behaviour. Even if there was, if we want to maintain any semblance of a free society, then health decisions must be personal ones – not made under coercion or even pressure from anyone else.

Our society itself is sick. Perhaps the worst thing about the ‘mental health’ system is that it tries to adapt people to this malfunctioning system instead of examining and holding up to the light the system itself. There might be many well-intentioned people working within the mental health system, but the system itself is counterfeit.

## More information

You can find more information on some of the following websites.<sup>1</sup>

- **MindFreedom Ireland** - <http://www.mindfreedomireland.com/>
- **MadInAmerica** website - <https://www.madinamerica.com/>
- **Surviving Antidepressants** - <https://www.survivingantidepressants.org/>
- Authors / speakers – **Thomas Szasz, Peter Breggin, Bonnie Burstow, Robert Whitaker, Lars Martensson**

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1 A bibliography for the references in this leaflet is available on request.

# Bibliography

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