

Poisoning the Poor

Fritz

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As a survivor of more than a decade of psychiatric abuse, I oppose the pseudo-scientific concept of “Mental Illness” entirely. Unlike physical illnesses that are biologically based and sometimes have chemical cures, Mental Illness is a social construct used to justify abuse for the purpose of social control.

Problems commonly mislabeled as Mental Illness include anything from an unfulfilling lifestyle, to food allergies like celiac, to the stifling roles of school, work, and the binary gender system, endocrine problems such as hypothyroidism, loneliness, vitamin deficiencies, current or past experiences of violence and abuse, social oppression, recent drug use, or the types of stress and exhaustion that effects refugees, the homeless, and desperately poor people worldwide. Ironically, increasing numbers of people are suffering emotional problems due to the abusive treatments provided by the psychiatric industry itself, often while children.

In a caring, non-authoritarian society, people could receive help for emotional pain and real world causes would be addressed. Psychiatry chooses to ignore the social roots and, instead, suppress the person’s emotional cry for help with brain damaging drugs. This is rather like giving a person with a broken leg a painkiller to shut them up, while neglecting to set their bone.

The potential negative repercussions of drugging someone with psych meds are far more complex and dangerous than this metaphor suggests since psychiatric drugs cause brain damage and their listed side effects include the symptoms of every imaginable “psychiatric disease,” from hyperactivity, to depression, insomnia, paranoia, even hallucinations. How many people are then trapped in an endless cycle; being drugged in an attempt to control the distressing effects that the drugs themselves are causing?

The profit-driven medical establishment ignores the destructive effects of the pharmaceuticals they are dealing, but are happy to tell us all about the dangers of street drugs, because they are their main competition.

The reason psychiatric drugs cause harm is the same reason they often seem to work; they suppress the functioning of the brain. Granted, there are many people who feel they could not get through life without psychiatric drugs, but there are also many people who ascribe this role to heroin, crystal meth, or copious amounts of alcohol. I have no desire to prevent someone from drugging themselves if this is what they choose to do, but it can hardly be recommended as a healthy coping strategy.

Many people simply don’t know that psych drugs are addictive substances and have withdrawals, just like street drugs. Doctors rarely inform their patients that the drugs they prescribe will cause the person to get strung out on them.

The government promotes drugs because addicted people—no matter what they are addicted to—are easier to control. Society simply prefers for its addicts to be strung out on pharmaceuticals because they are easier to regulate, and that way, all of the money goes to the American pharmaceutical industry (top donors to political candidates) instead of to some poppy growing cartel in Afghanistan. People who seek help to get clean of illegal drugs will often be prescribed psychiatric drugs, thus simply shifting their addiction from one substance to another.

Many urban social service agencies recruit homeless people for experimental studies. As a formerly homeless young person, I have witnessed this predation play out first hand at youth drop-in centers where psychiatric drugs

are pushed on exhausted young people who are simply overwhelmed trying to cope with the stress of survival on the streets, haunted by the painful circumstances they so often ran away from (which increasingly includes psychiatric abuse).

Tests are currently being conducted in Philadelphia on homeless people with a brain control implant. Once placed under the skin, it cannot be removed, and delivers high doses of neuroleptics continuously for up to a year. The stereotypical twitchy behavior of a seemingly “crazy” person, often older and homeless, is, in fact, not a symptom of a psychiatric disorder, but simply evidence of the harm inflicted upon them at some point in their life by psychiatrists. More than 60 per cent of people who have been drugged with neuroleptics (commonly referred to as anti-psychotics) will develop Tardive Dyskinesia, a permanent condition of often severe, painful, and disabling spasms and tics.

Most recent proposals by local governments to eliminate homelessness are based on the assumption that homeless people are mentally ill and rely on forced incarceration in psychiatric institutions as a way to provide housing for them. In many locations, submitting to psychiatric drugging is already a prerequisite for the homeless to receive basic services such as showers, meals, and shelter.

Public housing residents are frequently forced to take drugs, and if they refuse may be denied custody of their children and forced onto the streets. Psychiatrists and social workers call the increasingly popular practice of forcing entry into a victim’s home to drug them against their will “a community treatment order.”

Often, children attempting to report child abuse, or adults (usually women) trying to flee an abusive relationship will be forcibly drugged or institutionalized. Psychiatrists rarely bother to investigate a woman’s report of domestic violence or a child’s report of molestation; instead, psychiatry sides with their abusive family to silence the victim and allow the abuse to continue. Abusive families and the inherently abusive psychiatric industry make a powerful alliance that is hard for a frightened survivor to escape.

Frequently, children in foster care are used in experimental drug studies. A study is being conducted in Philadelphia and New York, funded by proponents of the racist Bell Curve theory, to see if “high risk inner city youth” are less likely to become “violent young adults” if they are dosed with psychiatric drugs starting in childhood.

More and more children are labeled mentally ill by school systems and barred from attending school undrugged, while families (primarily low income) are charged with child neglect for refusing to drug their children. Parents are actually losing custody of their children for the refusal to give them drugs. Parents are actually losing custody of their children for the refusal to submit to drugging themselves. The psychiatric industry, with its blatant disregard for consent, is actively tearing apart the families of the people who dare to say “No.”

Unlike people labeled with a lung or liver ailment, those diagnosed with a “mental disorder” are presumed incompetent to make their own decisions, and the psychiatric industry is allowed to decide for them.

Supposedly, it is unconstitutional to hold someone in preventative detention. That is to imprison someone charged with no crime, simply because you think they might do something later. However, anywhere in the country, if someone thinks that you might be “a danger to yourself or others,” regardless of whether or not you have actually done anything illegal, you can be imprisoned in a psychiatric facility. And, over the past few years things have taken a turn for the worse. Now, primarily as a tool to illegally incarcerate the very poor, many states are passing laws allowing people to be imprisoned even if they are not considered to be “a danger to themselves or others.” All that is required is the recommendation of a psychiatrist.

Once captive inside a psychiatric institution, a prisoner is likely to be heavily dosed with brain damaging drugs, typically potent cocktails of neuroleptics, which act as a chemical straight-jacket, rendering thought, speech, and even movement extremely difficult.

How many people have made false confessions or signed papers agreeing to electroshock or a lobotomy while so heavily drugged that they did not realize what they were doing? The tactic is the same as a predator who slips his victims a date rape drug. Psychiatry operates with a blatant and publicly approved disregard for informed consent.

As a survivor of psychiatric abuse, and a formerly homeless youth, the social ramifications of programs that target the poor and economically undesirable for control with brain damaging drugs are obvious to me. Unfortunately, however, most liberals and progressives (and apparently also some anarchists) support these projects under the umbrella title of “community mental health.”

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This article is based on the ideas contained in the 'zine *Against Psychiatry*. Available from the author. Contact againstpsychiatry@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.pigeonpress.org/againstpsychiatry.html>

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