

The Anxiety Bureau

Forward

Something in modern mental health care isn't working. Mental health is deteriorating, particularly in young people, and rates of psychiatric diagnosis keep rising despite the proliferation of pharmacological and psychological treatments. The more services we have, the worse the outcomes seem to be. The political and institutional response to this calamity is a one-eyed monster that says '*I need more - give me more*', insatiably devouring, not only resources, but people who are hypnotised into believing that life will improve through ingesting the latest product offered by the Mental Health Industrial Complex. Later they find themselves trapped in an Alice in Wonderland emotional roller coaster, collecting labels and treatments whilst they get sicker.

It's not easy to see a world beyond the one sold to us with 'just so' stories of progress – of science – as if we know what mental health is and where psychiatric diagnoses exists as facts of nature not culture. But what if the yarns that create anti-stigma and mental health awareness campaigns ARE the problem. What if the idea that our experiences, our emotions and the sensations they create, are actually potential 'symptoms' (i.e., something abnormal, pathological to be eliminated) makes things worse. What if it this mental health ideology that has thrust us into a paranoid world where we are at war with ourselves, consumed by attempts to control perfectly natural responses.

In this book three friends come together to discuss this possibility. All three have experienced distress and what we now class as mental health difficulties. One of them has had decades of this, accumulating psychiatric diagnoses and treatments, including being involuntary hospitalised several times. The resulting conversation is as disturbing and disjointed as it is illuminating and coherent. At times reading like a stream of consciousness – or more accurately of unconsciousness – where the barriers that we erect, born of an infantile wish that the world we inhabit could be trouble free, become increasingly visible, visceral, and disconcerting. A profoundly simple truth lies hidden in the messy destruction mental health ideology has wrought upon us. The reader leaves this important book with a question answered, but each will be challenged as to whether they can intuit this authentically.

This is a terrific book that will help most, if not all, of those who are confused about what mental health is and how to find it.

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