

Statement Supporting the British Psychological Society's  
Statement on Functional Psychiatric Diagnoses  
May 16, 2013

The International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry (ISEPP) strongly supports the Position Statement on the Classification of Behaviour and Experience in Relation to Functional Psychiatric Diagnoses that was recently issued by the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) of the British Psychological Society (BPS).

We especially endorse the following elements of the Statement in which the DCP expresses:

A need for a paradigm shift in relation to the experiences (classified as diagnoses by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM] and the International Classification of Diseases: Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorders [ICD]) towards a conceptual system not based on a disease model;

Concern over the limited reliability and questionable validity of the psychiatric diagnoses in the DSM and ICD;

Concern about the increasing medicalization of distress and behavior in both adults and children;

A call for an approach that fully acknowledges the growing amount of evidence for psychosocial causal factors, does not assign an unevidenced role for biology as a primary cause and that is transparent about the very limited support for the disease model in such conditions;

Recognition that psychiatric diagnosis obscures the link between people's experiences, distress and behavior and social, cultural, familial and personal historical contexts;

Recognition that diagnosis can lead to an over-reliance on medication while underplaying the impact of (medication's) physical and psychological effects;

A call for an approach that is multifactorial, contextualizes distress and behavior and acknowledges the complexity of the interaction involved in all human experience.

ISEPP applauds the British Psychological Society for sounding the alarm on the harm that is done by the classification system that is represented by the DSM and ICD and urges the American Psychological Association to take a stand, one way or the other, on that system.