



ISEPP

International Society for Ethical Psychology & Psychiatry



FROM THE DIRECTOR

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We are witnessing a tragedy sprouting from our southern border. Migrant children have been forcibly separated from their parents and indefinitely locked up in makeshift facilities while the parents are processed as illegal immigrants.

I do not intend to address the merits of this policy or who is to blame. I also do not want to talk about how the parents and children, as well as many immigration officials, will certainly live with the psychological echoes of this trauma for years to come. Instead, I want to focus on how this debacle is revealing the harmful nature of the conventional mental health industry.

The purpose of traditional mental health treatment has always been "symptom reduction." This is inherent in a medical model worldview that sees emotional and behavioral problems as illnesses. What else could such a worldview conclude about the target of treatment? The expressions of people in distress are seen as symptoms that need to be eliminated. How is this done?

Talk therapy explores different ways to help people eliminate those symptoms. How can we help the person reduce the sadness, quash the fear, or ease the shame? With the typical "go to" treatment of psychiatric drugs, it means finding the right chemical combination to medicate the chemical imbalances of sadness, fear, and shame. When those symptoms are reduced, it is heralded as effective treatment that works.

But what is really happening here? If we brush away the linguistic gymnastics, what we see is a system focused solely on coercing and sometimes blackmailing people to shut up about their problems. This has always been the case, from the days of insulin comas, to hydrotherapy, to lobotomies, to ECT, and into the present-day chemical forms of mental health treatment. We are seeing this very thing happening on the border.

Terrified migrant children are understandably rebelling against captivity in a strange land without the comfort of their parents. We would expect them to naturally withdraw inside themselves in an attempt to soothe their angst or courageously act out in an attempt to battle this fiasco. They are the canaries in the coal mine. What does the traditional mental health system expect? It expects the canaries to stop complaining. It wants to reduce the symptoms of these "behavioral issues" and "mental health problems" as if complaining and rebelling against inhumane treatment is a disease. The only thing the children want is to maintain a sense of being human. The authoritarian mental health industry wants to maintain control.

[*The Huffington Post*](#) recently reported this diseasing of childhood happening at the Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities in Texas. Children are being forcibly drugged under the guise of mental health treatment, but in actuality, the purpose is to get them to shut up and settle down. That makes them easier to manage. Interviews of the children and examination of their records show that facility staff are using physical restraint and extortion to make sure they are drugged. This is happening not only without their consent, but also without the consent of their parents. And in addition to the chemical straightjacketing effects of the drugs, the

children are being set up to later suffer the horrible effects of withdrawal. Can we imagine a more traumatic and inhumane thing to do to children? It removes their ability to be and feel human.

This mental health disaster in Texas calls for outrage. But don't forget this has been happening all around the world for decades. The mental health industry has been given a tremendous amount of authority over personal choices and conduct, just by redefining what it means to be ill. Once our experiences and actions are dubbed illnesses, doctors can then judge which of them are in need of treatment, and therefore which voices must be silenced. This includes the complaints of the migrant children in Texas and their attempts to find comfort.

Announcements

~ISEPP's 21st Annual Conference - October 19-21, 2018



REGISTER NOW! Our October conference in Toronto, Canada, is titled "Empowering Individuals and Communities: An Ethical and Holistic Approach to Wellbeing." The location for the conference is the Novotel Toronto Centre Hotel. You can beat the rush by making hotel reservations now. Take a look at our tentative list of speakers at our website. Among them is Irving Kirsch, Ph.D., the author of *The Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding the Antidepressant Myth*. More information and a specific conference schedule will be uploaded to the ISEPP webpage very soon.

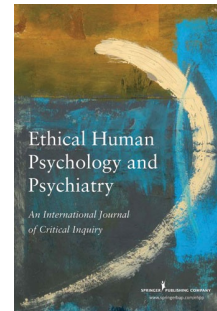
~Become an ISEPP Member



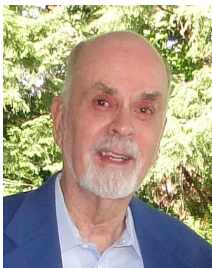
We are always looking for new members. We are especially interested in finding mental health professionals out there who are tired of the medical model's failed assumptions and inhumane ways of treating people who are struggling with very real life problems. If you are a professional or know of any who would be interested in joining a group of like-minded people who want to continue helping those in need, but not within the medical model, please consider [joining us!](#)

~Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry

For those of you who are members, please take the time to review the latest issue of [Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry \(EHPP\)](#). It is a special issue on Thomas Szasz and one of his proteges and strongest supporters, Ron Liefer, M.D. Ron had been sharing several essays with some of us prior to his death last year. These essays were his attempt to continue Szasz's legacy by addressing six main areas of concern he had about the mental health field. They provide an amazing glimpse into the mind of one of the 20th century's greatest rebels!



~The Passing of Leighton Whitaker



We have lost another one of our most hard working members. Dr. Leighton Whitaker of Media, Pennsylvania, died last month at the age of 86. Leighton was on our editorial staff of *EHPP* for many years and was instrumental in keeping the journal a success. From his [obituary](#): "A lover of Shostakovich, The Ink Spots, sports, and barking out car windows at dogs, Lee will be profoundly missed by his family, a lifetime of patients and colleagues, countless readers, and a world in search of emotional healing." ISEPP has been enriched by his dedication to our cause. He definitely will be missed.

~Documentary on Psychiatric Drugs

I was contacted by Erica Fegely, a producer from [Breaking Heads Productions](#), who is doing a documentary about the iatrogenic effects of psychiatric drugs. She is interested in talking to professionals about their experiences with this problem. If you are interested in being part of this effort, feel free to contact her



at erica@breakingheadsproductions.com.

As always, I ask that you share this newsletter and other ISEPP information through your social networking sites. Also, make sure to visit our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Feel free to contact me at docruby@me.com or 301-646-6022 if you have any questions or suggestions.

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