



ISEPP

International Society for Ethical Psychology & Psychiatry

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Chuck Ruby, Ph.D.

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We are once again reeling from a tragic act of violence. Seventeen people were killed yesterday at a school in south Florida. This was at the hands of a 19-year-old with an AR-15 assault rifle and who was recently expelled from the school for disciplinary reasons. His adoptive mother died of pneumonia last November, forcing him and his brother to move in with family friends. He was reported by other students to have a keen interest in guns and to be a "loner," "unstable," and "sinister." He legally purchased the rifle last year after passing a background check. Will this ever stop?

We in ISEPP frequently talk about the key factors involved in such savagery and what it will take to turn this apparent trend around. We try to convince people that "mental illness" is not the culprit. We scream out to those who will listen that the very mental health system that ostensibly tries to prevent these acts is implicated. Psychiatric drug use increases the chances that shootings like this will happen. Whether that is true in this situation may never be known. Further,

the medical-modeled, authoritarian, and inhumane nature of the system itself can create some of the very circumstances that lead to violence. This includes feelings of persecution and mistreatment, which can lead to social isolation and thought control problems. Psychiatric drugs, alcohol, illicit drugs, social isolation, persecutory feeling, and difficulty controlling thoughts interact with each other in a magnifying effect to create a spiral of increasing alienation and pain. When this alienation is coupled with easy access to guns, it increases the chances that one's rage will translate into lethal action.

Notwithstanding the significance of these problems, we sometimes overlook the seemingly increasing culture of violence we live in and, in particular, a culture that encourages revenge against evil doers and taking matters into our own hands for "justice sake." I'm already hearing people talking about how we should retaliate against this young man and give him a taste of his own medicine, even though he was someone who was acting out his own sense of revenge against those who he felt had harmed him. And on and on it goes. What value do we place in encouraging people to think in terms of seeking justice against wrongdoings, to see the world in a dichotomous good-evil competition, and who gets to decide the identity of the evil doers? The Hatfields and the McCoys disagreed on this for decades. How can we expect anything clearer if we continue to see revenge and retaliation as something worthy of our time? Aren't we just providing fuel for incidents like this and locking ourselves in a perpetual cycle of violence?

Anger is the trigger for violence. Anger happens when something else hurts too much, far too much. It is a good characteristic from an evolutionary perspective because when threatened with survival, and the hurt that entails, anger can be quite useful in staying alive. But for the most part, we've outlived this evolutionary need. Most of the time, we aren't on guard for our very survival. It is only in extreme circumstances, like for the victims of this shooting, that we find ourselves fighting for that survival. But I would argue that far more often we are fighting instead for our social survival. This 19-year-old killer was faced with that fight. So, we are left with the challenge of harnessing the anger we feel when these shootings occur, or the anger we feel in times of social threat, such as what this shooter must have felt, and of using that sense of power to assertively take action.

But the only action that will be effective in reducing the chances that these shootings happen is civil and cooperative, not aggressive and deadly, action. Will this ever stop?

Announcements

~ISEPP Membership Renewal and New Member Drive



I want to remind all of you to make sure you [renew your ISEPP membership](#) as soon as possible. Many of you have not yet renewed and I know most of you receiving this newsletter are not yet members. Remember that membership runs from January through December each calendar year. If you are not sure you are paid up for 2018, or you have any questions about the benefits of membership, contact our Membership Committee Chair, Robert Sliclen, at 201-664-2566 or sliclen@optonline.net. It only takes few moments, so don't miss out on remaining or becoming an active ISEPP member by [renewing or joining now!](#)

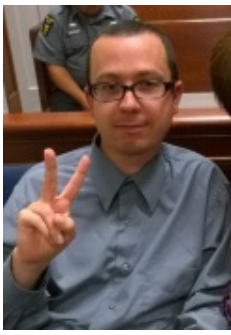
~Laura Delano Launches Non-Profit

Laura Delano has launched a new non-profit called [Inner Compass Initiative](#) (ICI). It provides information and resources to help people make more informed choices regarding all things “mental health” and to support people who wish to leave, bypass, or build community beyond the mental health system. Its first major effort, [The Withdrawal Project](#) (TWP), is a comprehensive online hub for safer psychiatric drug withdrawal. The resources on the ICI and TWP websites include a detailed layperson’s “Companion Guide” to safer tapering from psychiatric medications; mini-booklets that provide detailed, critical information about psychiatric drugs, psychiatric diagnoses, and the mental health industry; and two networking platforms to help people who are thinking critically about the mental health system or seeking support for psychiatric drug withdrawal to find each other in their local communities. Congratulations Laura. Your hard work is paying off!



**INNER COMPASS
INITIATIVE**

~John Rohrer Has Been Released!



I'm happy to announce that on January 25, 2018, John Rohrer, a man in his mid-30's, was unconditionally released from a psychiatric hospital in Ohio. In September 2009, John was incarcerated in a hospital after having pled not guilty by reason of insanity for committing an assault while he was on psychiatric drugs. He has no other history of violent behavior and his assault was in retaliation for being attacked earlier by the victim. While in the hospital, John continued to be subjected to the harms of psychiatric chemicals through forced drugging. ISEPP was asked to help and in 2014, we submitted a ["friend of the court" brief](#) explaining the nature of violence, risk factors associated with it, and, in particular, how psychiatric drugs can increase one's risk, just like alcohol and illicit drugs. In November 2014, after several court hearings, the forced drugging was stopped. His legal battle continued, however, and we were just notified by his mother, Katherine Hine, that he was unconditionally released in late January 2018. From a [website set up to monitor his struggle](#), a 2013 post reads, "John hopes that his daily struggle will inspire citizens to take a hard look at Ohio's mental illness system so that he and others who today suffer alongside him, will one day be free and treated with dignity, not taxpayer sponsored torture."

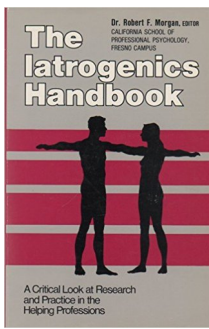
~**Bruce Levine, Ph.D., and the Stigma of Mental Illness**

Check out Bruce's [latest article in CounterPunch](#). With the title, Mental Illness Weaponry and Shrink Hypocrisy About Abolishing Stigma, he unveils the hypocrisy of empty campaigns within our profession "to abolish the stigma of mental illness." He points out, rightly so, that stigmatization is part and parcel of diagnosing mental illness. So, while many in the profession, and in mental health grassroots organizations such as NAMI, talk about the importance of not stigmatizing people "with" mental illness, they nonetheless encourage the liberal diagnosing of it. They can't have it both ways. Another great job Bruce!



~**Bob Morgan, Ph.D., and Iatrogenesis**

I wanted to highlight one of our ISEPP members's books in this newsletter. Bob Morgan's [Iatrogenics Handbook](#) may be dated somewhat, but it is an important contribution to a danger that is hiding in plain sight. It is hard to tell, but there are certainly many situations where the mental health system's treatment of people actually cause their problems to get worse, or even create the problem from the outset. Take the time to look at Bob's other works such



as: [Opportunity's Shadow and the Bee Moth Effect: When Danger Transforms Community: An Existential Psychology Approach to Chaos and Choice in Social, Community, Clinical, and Iatrogenic Contexts](#); [Electroshock: The Case Against](#); and [Trauma Psychology in Context: International Vignettes and Applications From a Lifespan Clinical-Community Psychology Perspective](#).

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