



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter April 2015

*“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.”
Lao Tzu*

“BRUSH AWAY YOUR TEARS”© - It shouldn't hurt to be a child

Brush away the tears from your eyes my child, The world don't want to see you cry
Brush away the tears from your eyes my child, The world don't want to hear you cry

This is the opening chorus to a song I wrote, back in the Fall of 2005. I wrote this song in one day. The inspiration and the motivation came about after finishing up a phone call in which I was asked to present at a conference being held at Georgetown University in Washington, DC on Trafficking and Slavery. The conference was a joint collaboration of Georgetown University, the United Nations and the State Department..*wow*, I thought to myself, this is pretty cool...BUT this was very confusing to me. I was humbled and honored to be asked, but trafficking and slavery...??? And me?? So I asked my friend, Christine Dolan, who was part of this endeavor, why have me present? Her response, “*Michael, what happened to you as a child and what you were made to do and taken into other homes was trafficking.....*” my mind went blank to the rest of her words and I felt a deep searing pain throughout my body.

My mind was busy trying to process this information...I was confused and this didn't make sense to me...I know I had been horribly abused...but '*trafficked*', I always thought that trafficking only applies to children and adults in other countries, not here in the US. And yet here I was, minimizing and negating my own experiences and that of the other children who were abused alongside me. This left me with a lot to ponder....As a young boy, I always remembered pictures being taken while these despicable actions were taking place...I remember seeing magazines and newspapers of child pornography, but as a child, I did not have the where-with-all to put two and two together...today as an adult, I can.

I did agree to be a part of this event and this song came about because of the mixed feelings inside of me. I was in a dark place back then. I was feeling so frustrated and angry at the indifference of so many for not addressing child abuse in all of its forms. I was angry at the mental health practitioners not addressing it - too busy telling me and others how we are, “*mentally ill*”, angry at the national mental health organizations who claimed to be our advocates - they heard from so many of us about our childhood trauma and abuse, but all they wanted to talk about was our “diseased brains”, our defective genes, etc; I was angry at being excluded from so many events because I was a male, angry at friends

for not taking child abuse seriously [all they worried about was the, “*stranger danger*”]....behind all of my anger, the sadness I felt for society, as a whole, failing to address child abuse.

Back then, I had such high hopes and expectations. I was naive to think that once people heard of the connection between child abuse and all of the health ramifications, that there would be an outcry to help end it as we know it...but, it was once again swept under the rug and stayed in denial from so many.

Unfortunately, that still holds true today, BUT, I do see the progress that is out there and recognize the many people and organizations doing great works to help raise awareness on child abuse. The same holds true for those addressing sexual assault. We have a long ways to go, but today I have more hope for the future.

*“There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.”
Nelson Mandela*

April is nationally recognized as **Child Abuse Prevention Month** and **Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month [SAAM]**, a time for the WORLD to come together on these concerns that are a 100% preventable, if we all do our part.

Some resources to help you with this endeavor - [National Child Abuse Prevention Month 2015](#)

Prevention Publications - The Children's Bureau's information service, Child Welfare Information Gateway, offers a number of publications related to preventing child abuse, protecting children from the risk of abuse, and promoting healthy families. Listed below are several bulletins for professionals, fact-sheets for families, and issue briefs that cover research and evidence-based or evidence-informed practices for preventing maltreatment.

What are your plans to help in being a part of the change, to end child abuse in all of its forms???
Please let me know...Thanks!!

Michael Skinner

[Brush Away Your Tears](#) – live performance, cable TV show - You Tube 4:42 minutes

“Abuse manipulates and twists a child's natural sense of trust and love. Her innocent feelings are belittled or mocked and she learns to ignore her feelings. She can't afford to feel the full range of feelings in her body while she's being abused - pain, outrage, hate, vengeance, confusion, arousal. So she short-circuits them and goes numb. For many children, any expression of feelings, even a single tear, is cause for more severe abuse. Again, the only recourse is to shut down. Feelings go underground.” Laura Davis

“The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love.” Hubert H. Humphrey

1] [In The Hollow Films](#) - Our films are dedicated to survivors of violence and trauma everywhere. May you gain strength and find your voice to share your own stories. Laura Cain

In The Hollow Films is a documentary production company dedicated to giving voice to people living on the margins while shining a light on many of society's most pressing – and uncomfortable – issues.

In collaboration with a core group of independent filmmakers, ITH Films produces documentaries that have had a profound and lasting impact on the policies and practices of a wide-variety of systems, including criminal and juvenile justice, social services, mental health and substance abuse.

Laura Cain produced and directed the 2007 short documentary, "Behind Closed Doors: Trauma Survivors and The Psychiatric System," which exposed the harm caused by psychiatric practices to people who had survived childhood abuse. In 2010, she directed and produced "Healing Neen," which follows the amazing recovery of a survivor of childhood abuse from homelessness, drug addiction and multiple incarcerations to become one of the nation's leading voices on the need for trauma treatment. Recently, Laura worked as co-producer on "Pursuit of Truth," slated for release in 2013, which examines the challenges encountered by adult victims of childhood sexual abuse seeking justice against their perpetrators. She is currently directing and producing "[Walking Thru Bullets](#)," which follows the experiences of two young victims of violence trying to heal their physical and emotional wounds through an innovative trauma program based out of an emergency department in Philadelphia.

In addition to being a filmmaker, Laura is a civil rights attorney at the Maryland Disability Law Center in Baltimore, MD.

"Today I live from my heart, not from my hurt." Svava Brooks

2] Oops, missed out that **March is Optimism Month** - here is a wonderful example & only 49 seconds long, but she's pumped!!! [Jessica's "Daily Affirmation"](#) – YouTube

3] [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#) – Free

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]

[PDF Download](#)

"A positive future cannot emerge from the mind of anger and despair." Dalai Lama

4] [Can People Really Change? - Emotional Geographic](#) - Gretchen Schmelzer

"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change." Thich Nhat Hanh

I work as a therapist. I work as a consultant. I work as an executive coach. And I have heard this

question hundreds, if not thousands of times over the course of my career. “Can people really change?” And behind that question is actually the statement, “I mean, he’s always going to be that way right? I mean, there’s no point in even getting him help, if he can’t change.”

The psychologist Gordon Allport once said that the definition of personality was essentially that you know who you are when you wake up tomorrow. So yes, there is something enduring about each of us. Some thread that runs through all of our years and make each of us who we are - so there is something in us that feels unchangeable. And indeed when those things do change - typically because of brain injury or memory loss - then we know longer feel like ourselves and people feel like they lost ‘us.’

So what do we mean when we talk about change? We don’t question whether babies and children can change. We pray that our teenagers will change. But somehow when we get to adulthood we believe in a fixed notion of a person. That they will essentially be who they are. So why bother with change - either my own or supporting someone else.

One of the problems is that change is a big topic. I can change my behavior: I can stop smoking or start exercising. I can shift my mindset and way of making meaning in the world: I can start taking another person’s perspective in a new way, or see a situation from multiple viewpoints—which I might call growth, but growth is change. I might use a behavior change to trigger growth: I might use behavioral change to stop interrupting people so that I am a better listener and with this change I can better understand other people’s perspectives.

Neuroscience, as I wrote about in the [Norman Doidge book review](#), states unequivocally that our brains can, and do, change. Brains are designed with neuroplasticity—and our brains will change based on what we do: they will shift to match their use. So at the neural level the answer is OF COURSE PEOPLE CAN CHANGE.

But all of us, every single one of us also knows that, it can be really difficult to make change. It is difficult to shift something, to learn something new. This is why we find ourselves doing that same, frustrating thing, *over and over again*. [Learn more](#)

“Each time I perform an act of kindness, a part of me heals.” Lupi Ngcayisa

“Where there is love there is life.” Mahatma Gandhi

5] [Emotional Geographic](#) - *Healing from trauma is possible - Healing is brave - No one heals alone*

We need to change the conversation about trauma.

For too long we have been trying to heal the symptoms of trauma, not the structures beneath.

This website is for those of you who have lived through wars: domestic, foreign, urban, military, personal—through days of terror, abuse, fear, captivity, injury, helplessness, surgery or illness.

This trail guide is for all those who are healing from PTSD and long term trauma and those who work with them and who love them.

It is a place to learn, explore and honor the journey back to wholeness and health.

It is a place to create, extend and build a new conversation about the effects of trauma and healing from long term trauma.

We are all journeyers--at times we will all need to heal, and at times, we will need to support those who are healing.

Inner wounds are invisible: we can't see people overcoming them, we can almost never appreciate the triumph—not even with ourselves. Emotional Geographic is a web magazine which puts these brave healing heroes on the metaphorical cover.

Emotional Geographic is place to share the the maps of the journeys to these difficult territories inside of us and giving us wisdom for the climb.

“Activism is my rent for living on the planet.” Alice Walker

6] As of January 2015 Emotional Geographic will begin to accept guest blog submissions or editor's picks. Submissions should be 500 words or less. Please keep in mind that this web-journal is focused on healing from trauma and the many ways that healing can happen. Only entries that are connected with healing and growth will be considered for publication.

The Trail Guide is a Web-mag intended to support the healing of long term trauma. It is inspired by exploration, innovation, research, learning, development, nature, art, writing, community work, and all therapeutic activities. It is a guide for all: for all of those who have experienced PTSD and long term trauma, all those who work with them and all of those who love and support them.

If you wish to submit writing or research to The Trail Guide, please see the [submission guidelines](#).

*“Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks. Listen to your heart, it knows.”
Native American Proverb*

7] [The Brain's Way of Healing](#) - Norman Doidge, MD

They thought that the brain was too sophisticated for its own good. That during evolution it became so complex that it lost the ability to repair itself and to restore lost functions or to preserve itself.

They were wrong. Because it turns out that its very sophistication can be the source of a unique kind of healing... The brain's way of healing...

The Brain's Way of Healing: Remarkable Discoveries and Recoveries from the Frontiers of Neuroplasticity

In his first book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Norman Doidge introduced readers to the most important change in our understanding of the brain since the beginning of modern science: the discovery that the brain can change its own structure and function in response to mental experience - the phenomenon of neuroplasticity. Now, his revolutionary new book, *The Brain's Way of Healing*,

shows, for the first time, how the amazing process of neuroplastic healing really works.

For centuries it was believed that the price we paid for our brain's complexity was that, compared with other organs, it was fixed and unregenerative - unable to recover mental abilities lost because of damage or disease. The Brain's Way of Healing turns that belief on its head, as Doidge lucidly explains how the brain's capacities are highly dynamic, and how its very sophistication makes possible a unique and gentle kind of healing. He describes natural, noninvasive avenues into the brain provided by the forms of energy around us - light, sound, vibration, movement - that can pass through our senses and our bodies to awaken the plastic brain's own transformative capacities without surgery or medication and their unpleasant side effects or risks.

Using this more nuanced understanding of how our brains work, scientists and practitioners have learned how to use neuroplastic therapies to address many common conditions and to offer hope where prospects for healing were long denied. We see patients in whom years of chronic pain have been alleviated, and others who have recovered the ability not just to walk or talk but to live fully despite debilitating strokes, as well as cases of long-standing brain injuries cured or vastly improved. We meet children on the autistic spectrum or with learning disorders or attention deficit disorder who have used neuroplastic techniques to achieve normal lives, and sufferers who have seen symptoms of multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and cerebral palsy radically diminished. And we learn how to vastly reduce the risk of dementia, or improve the brain's performance and health, with simple approaches anyone can use. [Learn more](#)

“Will power cannot eliminate in a day troubles that have taken root and flourished in my life for decades. Things take time.” Courage To Change

“You cannot create a statue by smashing the marble with a hammer, and you cannot by force of arms release the spirit or the soul of a man.” Confucius

8] [How to Heal Emotional Trauma](#) - Wake Up World by Nanice Ellis

Why is it so difficult to heal emotional trauma? Maybe it is because we do not understand what our emotional wounds really are, and therefore we go about healing in ways that can never work.

When I was young, I was in a horrifically abusive relationship for over a year. Even though I was able to eventually “get out” and save myself, it took me many years to figure out how to heal the deep emotional wounds.

Understanding Emotional Wounds - We tend to think of an emotional wound as the original traumatic experience – as the “thing” that happened to us, but the wound is actually the dis-empowering belief that we developed as a result of the traumatic experience.

In the search for emotional security, our natural response to any traumatic event is to make sense of it. We “make sense” of things by creating beliefs. Beliefs that we develop in response to traumatic experiences are Traumatic Beliefs. Because Traumatic Beliefs are dis-empowering and painful, they become emotional wounds.

The reason many people don't heal is because they try to heal the original traumatic experience and not

the Traumatic Belief. By understanding that emotional wounds are actually the Traumatic Beliefs that we hold about ourselves and/or the world, we have the power to heal.

When a child experiences himself as abandoned, for example, that child forms beliefs around abandonment in order to explain why he was abandoned. The child may answer the question, “Why?” by creating a belief that he was not good enough. The abandonment is not the wound. The wound is the belief in unworthiness. In this case, healing involves releasing the Traumatic Belief of unworthiness.

Two people can experience the same trauma and have completely different responses, because they develop very different beliefs about the experience.

Traumatic Beliefs Create Emotional Needs -Traumatic Beliefs always create corresponding emotional needs which must be met in order to heal. The catch is that a Traumatic Belief also creates an invisible barrier that keeps the emotional need from being met. For example, if the Traumatic Belief is, “I am not worthy,” the emotional need is feeling worthy. If you could feel unconditionally worthy, the wound would heal. The problem is, if you believe that you are not worthy, you will block the feeling of worthiness because it does not align with your beliefs about worth. This is also why healing is so challenging.

Traumatic Beliefs are Self-fulfilling and Self-Sabotaging - When we have been wounded, we feel justified in holding onto Traumatic Beliefs. Part of us may even think that these beliefs keep us from getting hurt again, and the thought of releasing them makes us feel very vulnerable – without these beliefs, what will protect us?

Take Full Responsibility - An essential key to healing is taking complete responsibility for your life and for your wounds. As long as you blame the outside world for your pain, you give away your power to heal. This is not about letting others off the hook who have harmed us. This is about empowering yourself to be whole. If you cannot find a way to take responsibility for your life experiences, then begin by taking responsibility for your beliefs.

Why are Traumatic Beliefs so Painful? - Traumatic Beliefs disconnect you from who you really are because your true self could never believe that you are powerless or unworthy. When you accept these dis-empowering beliefs, you experience separation from your true self and this is the cause of pain and suffering. The pain is your inner guidance system alerting you to the disconnection so that you can heal by releasing in-congruent beliefs. [Learn more](#) [lots to read, but worth it!!]

“Who then can so softly bind up the wound of another as he who has felt the same wound himself?”
Thomas Jefferson

9] [I want you to understand...Borderline Personality Disorder](#) – Charlotte – You Tube 4:22 minutes

Borderline Personality Disorder...This is a poem I've written about BPD. Sometimes, people don't take BPD seriously and I just wish that I could put them in my shoes to see what it is like....Sometimes though, people just do not understand BPD and, again, I wish for one day I could give them my pain and feel what I do, to help them understand. Charlotte x

Haunting music and a powerful sharing...I hope someday they start using a different name, other than BPD. Such a disparaging diagnosis to be given to anyone, especially since its roots come from trauma and abuse – not as a 'disordered person' with defective genes. Anyone I have ever known with this 'label' had a history of abuse, granted not a scientific study, but when you meet hundreds of folks in your travels and hear their stories, well...there is a common denominator of trauma and abuse, at least in the circles I have walked. Michael

“Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.” Maya Angelou

10] [Borderline Personality Disorder Symptoms](#) - Psych Central

“Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't do.” Rikki Rogers

11] [When “I” Becomes “We” Wellness Happens](#) - bpHope - bp Magazine Community – *HOPE AND HARMONY FOR PEOPLE WITH BIPOLAR* by Brad Hoefs

From my perspective, finding at least one person that you trust can be key for successful recovery. Let's be honest, bipolar disorder, when not treated or when your mood is not stabilized can distort your perception of reality and easily affect your behavior and choices. And when this happens we need someone to speak into our situation to help us make the necessary corrections in the course of our mental health recovery.

For me this person has been my wife. It took me a while to believe that she was truly on “my side”. It took me a while to truly trust that she had my best interest always in mind. I'm blessed and fortunate to have a spouse who understands and is trustworthy. I know this is not true for everyone who has a partner or is married who has a mental health challenge. And of course, if you are single it can be a challenge to find that one trustworthy friend.

But, I'm convinced having this “one person” in my life has enabled me to get past the “i” of illness. When I allowed my wife to begin to be a partner in my recovery, we moved to “we” and when you take the “i” off of illness and exchange it with “we”- you end up with wellness. And that is what I have experienced and continue to experience mental wellness.

Now we do not always agree. And when that happens she and I simply have an agreement that bring it to the attention of my doctor either at my next appointment or if it is of such a more urgent nature that I will call him. This is happened maybe once or twice in the last twelve years. And the doctor confirmed her concern one time and the other times he has confirmed my point of view. Because sometimes her concerns are based more upon her fear of my relapsing than based upon actually bipolar issues. And she is well aware of that.

Now, this “one-person” needs to be:

- someone that you not only trust, but someone that you feel completely safe with
- someone who believes in you
- someone who wants to see you succeed

- someone who believes that you can live well in spite of having bipolar disorder
- someone who will listen and understand you, but also challenge you to push through when it would be easier to give up
- someone who would be willing to go along with you to your doctor appointment from time to time
- someone who will hold you accountable; who can ask you the hard questions that are key for your recovery
- someone who has access to your doctor and therapist
- someone who has a fairly good understanding of bipolar disorder but is willing to learn a lot more and become as informed about bipolar and your particular journey with bipolar disorder as possible
- someone who knows you and part of your daily life
- someone that you are willing to allow to “speak-into” your recovery

Do you have someone like this to take the “i” out of your illness and make it a “we”, moving to wellness? How do you find this person? Who might this person be in your life? I’d encourage you to find this person and bring them onto your team.

Brad Hoefs is the founder of Fresh Hope, a national network of faith-based peer support groups for those who have mental health challenges and also for their loved ones. He is a certified Intentional Peer Specialist, and also serves on the State of Nebraska Advisory Committee on Mental Health. Brad was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder I in 1995. One of Brad’s passions is to empower peers to live a full and rich life in spite of a mental health challenge. Brad’s blog is “Living Well!” He is the author of Fresh Hope: Living Well in Spite of a Mental Health Diagnosis. He has a B.A. in Communications and a Masters of Divinity. Brad has been married to his wife, Donna, since 1979. They have two adult married children and love being grandparents to the grand kids! He is the pastor of Community of Grace in Elkhorn, Nebraska.

“I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.” Albert Schweitzer

12] [Mental health misdiagnosis twice as likely for socially disadvantaged groups](#) – Medical News Today

The shooting of an unarmed teenager in Ferguson, MO, has ignited a global discussion about implicit racial bias. One group of people you might think would be immune from this hidden bias is clinical therapists, people trained to understand the human mind. But a new field study finds that the social identities of patients and their therapists affect the accuracy of the diagnosis: **Therapists were twice as likely to misdiagnose mental illness when their patients were members of a disadvantaged, compared to an advantaged, group.**

In her own practice, Ora Nakash, a clinical psychologist at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel, began wondering how the social identities of her clients were affecting her decision-making process. “For example, a White therapist can interpret affect dysregulation symptoms of a client who is also White as rooted in financial pressures and diagnose him/her as having transient adjustment disorder,” she explains. “Conversely, if the client is African American, the same symptoms might be

seen as proof of the client's persistent borderline personality disorder.”

In a previous study, Nakash found that even with similar information collected during the mental health intake, clinicians weighed the information differently to assign a diagnosis depending on patients' ethnicity or race. “Here, we wanted to check if the therapist's social identity might impact the diagnostic decision-making process as well,” she says.

“This study is the first to empirically examine diagnostic accuracy in the context of mental health intakes when considering the identity of the client and therapist,” Nakash says. “If members of disadvantaged groups are more frequently misdiagnosed relative to advantaged group members as indicated by our findings, it is no surprise that the quality of the mental health services they receive, and their mental health outcomes, are worse.” [Learn more](#)

“Sometimes it is necessary to reteach a thing its loveliness...until it flowers again.” Galway Kinnell

13] [Creative Crafts & Child Abuse Awareness](#) by Lynn Tolson on Etsy

Do check out these amazing crafts that help to raise awareness on child abuse.

[Lynn Tolson on Etsy](#) Welcome to Abundant Arts and Vintage Ventures!

I am an artist, author, advocate, and antique aficionado. My Etsy shop offers you the fruits of my labor from my various interests.

Antiques and history are fascinating! I'm interested in the vintage market, searching and providing items for others to recycle and reuse. Artists on Etsy are infinitely creative in their ability to re-purpose and up cycle found objects!

I am the author of [Beyond the Tears: A True Survivor's Story](#), which is my memoir about overcoming abuse and adversity. Etsy is the place to purchase autographed copies and the one-of-a-kind bookmarks to go with You can find information on my work as an author/advocate at [Beyond the Tears Blog Spot](#)

As an advocate for victims of abuse, I rely on the creative process to balance the heavy topics with hope and healing.

My mission as an artist is to offer inspiration or insight, evoke an emotion or memory, stir the spirit, and provide pleasure for the viewer.

I've attended watercolor workshops facilitated by famed art teachers in the Midwest and Rocky Mountains. What I've learned is that there are principles of design to follow. But there is no formula; the same subject is never painted the same way twice, and art is subject to interpretation. Art is an evolving process with unexpected results.

Thank you for visiting! Explore and Enjoy!

“You can't hold a man down without staying down with him.” Booker T. Washington

14] [“Let's begin the end of sheltered workshops: a better society for all.”](#) Keenan Wellar |- LinkedIn

The recent media attention [see Ottawa Citizen articles 1-2-3-4 by Chris Cobb and an editorial given to the pending closure of the OCAPDD sheltered workshop at Tunney's Pasture in Ottawa exposed the general public to a hidden world that has been right in their backyard [and in the backyard of many communities across Ontario].

In the United States the controversy over sheltered workshops and sub-minimum wage pay for workers with intellectual disabilities has generated national attention through the practices of Goodwill Industries. I have watched the media as well as regular citizens try to sort through the conflicting and often inaccurate information. It would be funny if the takeaways were not so tragic.

OCAPDD is a provincially funded agency, but the main activity of their sheltered workshop program is paper sorting, and that activity has been fueled by a federal government contract that was to have ended this month.

Instead of developing a transition plan for the 50 individuals over the past two years [the approximate time since the ending of the contract was known] the sheltered workshop participants were instead thrust in front of the cameras, and their tears [based in completely rational fears produced results. Minister Poilievre announced a snap decision to continue the contract, emphasizing that "nothing has changed." What a pity.

After all, we are talking about a 40 year old institutional model of service, and we are talking about paying people with intellectual disabilities \$1.25 so we can all have our paper sorted more cheaply than if it were done by citizens who are not exempted from labour laws through a questionable dodge that sheltered workshops are “training programs.” [Learn more](#)

Keenan Wellar - Co-Leader & Director of Communications [LiveWorkPlay](#)

OUR MISSION: HELPING THE COMMUNITY WELCOME PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY AS VALUED CITIZENS!

CORE VALUE: PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ARE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY & TO THE HUMAN FAMILY

“We do not have to visit a madhouse to find disordered minds; our planet is the mental institution of the Universe.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

15] [PsychDrugs Action Campaign: National Center for Youth Law](#) - *Using the law to improve the lives of poor children.*

The National Center for Youth Law [NCYL] invites you to participate in a campaign to end the inappropriate and harmful sedation of tens of thousands of foster children. High doses of psychotropic “anti-psychotic” drugs produce lethargic, “zoned out” children, preventing their normal development. Medical guidelines do not sanction such sedation.

President Obama signed the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act in September

2011. This new law requires state child welfare agencies to adopt protocols for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications for foster children.

“Too much, too many, and too young”

2011 GAO Report finds numerous problems in the use of psychotropic drugs on foster children
“Foster children were prescribed psychotropic drugs at higher rates than were non-foster children in Medicaid.”

“Thousands of foster and non-foster children were prescribed doses exceeding maximum levels based on FDA-approved drug labels, which increases the potential for adverse side effects, and does not increase the efficacy of the drugs. Many of the drugs prescribed have not been approved for children by the FDA.”

"Foster children who change placements often do not have a consistent caretaker to plan treatment, offer consent, and provide oversight, which leads to gaps in care and non-adherence [not taking as prescribed].” [Learn more](#)

“The human heart has a way of making itself large again even after it's been broken into a million pieces.” Robert James Waller

16] [Signs That You've Been Abused by a Narcissist](#) - After Narcissistic Abuse – There is Light, Love, Life & Laughter

1. YOU DOUBT YOURSELF - Do you recognize that you're doubting yourself more than you ever have before? Victims of narcissistic abuse often appear uncertain of themselves, constantly seeking clarification that they haven't made a mistake or misheard something.
2. CONFUSION - it's confusing to KNOW that you aren't responsible for someone else's behavior, thinking and feeling but to be CONSTANTLY SCOLDED for behaving, thinking and feeling as if you ARE
3. FEELING CRAZY - Every minute of every hour of every day of every year, a Narcissist, who has a DSM classifiable personality DISORDER (ie: not playing with a full deck) is PROJECTING their disorder onto those around them. If you don't think that having a crazy person constantly blaming you for being “crazy” will make you crazy, I'd like to introduce you to a narcissist that will convince you otherwise.

They say, “Hurt people, HURT people”. I say, “Narcissistic People DESTROY PEOPLE”.

4. EMERGING CLUSTER OF SYMPTOMS THAT HAVE NO OTHER EXPLANATION - Sufferers report that their spark has gone out and, even years later, find they just cannot get motivated about anything.

Unaware that we've been living in a war zone with a tyrannical narcissist, we can't quite grasp the words to articulate the abuse, yet at the same time, we VERY MUCH FEEL IT. We present ourselves to the mental health community, incapable of speaking about an abuse we yet know nothing about. Until

that word, “NARCISSISTIC ABUSE” is given to us, we have NO IDEA that is what’s causing our pain. That’s why it’s SO IMPORTANT to get the word out there, what narcissists look like, their modus operandi, the words and phrases they use, so that when a victim of their abuse begins looking for answers, they quickly will be able to identify that they are involved with a narcissist.

5. DISSOCIATION - Victims tend to ‘dissociate’ or detach from their emotions, body, or surroundings. Living in a war zone where all forms of power and control are used against you (intimidation; emotional, physical and mental abuse; isolation, economic abuse, sexual abuse, coercion, control etc), the threat of abuse is always present. Dissociation is an automatic coping mechanism against overwhelming stress.
6. PTSD - Let’s face it. If I didn’t mention PTSD, or Complex PTSD, I would NOT be doing the topic of narcissistic abuse syndrome ANY justice. [Learn more](#)

“The highest form of wisdom is kindness.” The Talmud

“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” William Shakespeare

17] [Denver Coffee Shop Hires Homeless Youth, Gives Them Second Chance 'No One Else Would'](#) – Huffington Post

Most bosses avoid meddling in their employees' personal lives, but Madison Chandler and Mark Smesrud are different.

They co-founded Purple Door Coffee, a Denver-based nonprofit that employs young people “who have been homeless and want to leave homelessness behind.” The shop provides a 52-week curriculum, teaching employees practical skills - like budgeting and banking -- as well as the know-how to improve their physical, emotional and mental health.

“We believe that every human being has incredible value,” Smesrud, the group's program director, said in a video on the coffee shop's website, which is also posted above. "It's not defined by their successes or their failures, but the fact that they're human."

Purple Door Coffee, which opened almost two years ago, takes in teens and young adults three at a time and provides them with a job for one year, as NBC 9 News in Denver reported. Smesrud said he and Chandler chose a coffee shop as a catalyst to carry out their idea, as it allows for employees to learn a diversity of skills - like customer service and cleanliness -- while providing an open space for the community to gather.

The store's name has symbolic meaning, too, Chandler explained in the video, as purple has historically represented royalty.

“We want every single person that walks through our door - whether it's an employee or a customer or a vendor or whoever it is - to be treated like royalty and to be given a fair chance, no matter what they've done or haven't done,” she said.

Purple Door Coffee is aiming to curb a recent surge in homelessness among young people in Denver.

Urban Peak, a local nonprofit that helps people aged 15 to 24 years old who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, recorded a staggering 153 percent spike in clients who had no stable shelter last summer, the group's CEO told Colorado Public Radio in December. [Learn more](#)

[News Video 4:32 minutes - Denver coffee shop gives jobs to homeless young adults](#)

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.” Maya Angelou

Purple Door Coffee is a specialty espresso bar and coffee shop in Denver, Colorado that employs teens and young adults who have been homeless and want to leave homelessness behind.

Our Mission - *To reclaim and sustain the lives of homeless youth and young adults through supportive and meaningful employment.*

“It takes courage to love, but pain through love is the purifying fire which those who love generously know. We all know people who are so much afraid of pain that they shut themselves up like clams in a shell and, giving out nothing, receive nothing and therefore shrink until life is a mere living death.” Eleanor Roosevelt

18] [Loving Healing Press](#)

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“Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart” Eleanor Roosevelt

19] [Parental Alienation and Hostile Aggressive Parenting Awareness Organization](#) - Emotional and mental child abuse

[Letters from children of alienation](#) – *Parental Alienation hurts*

[Parental Alienation Awareness Day April 25th](#)

“Be soft. Do not let the world make you hard. Do not let pain make you hate. Do not let the bitterness

steal your sweetness. Take pride that even though the rest of the world may disagree, you still believe it to be a beautiful place.” Kurt Vonnegut

20] [The Power of Empathy](#) video 2:53 minutes Films For Action

What is the best way to ease someone's pain and suffering? In this beautifully animated RSA Short, Dr Brené Brown reminds us that we can only create a genuine empathic connection if we are brave enough to really get in touch with our own fragilities.

[Films For Action](#): Watch And Share Films Made To Inspire Action For A Better World

“Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakes.” Carl Jung

Take care, Michael, Mary, Becky, Cynthia, Lynn & Mary Ann

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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