

Declaration of Principles

The Tenth Annual International Conference on Human Rights and Psychiatric Oppression, held in Toronto, Canada on May 14-18, 1982 adopted the following principles:

1. We oppose involuntary psychiatric intervention including civil commitment and the administration of psychiatric procedures ("treatments") by force or coercion or without informed consent.
2. We oppose involuntary psychiatric intervention because it is an unethical and unconstitutional denial of freedom, due process and the right to be left alone.
3. We oppose involuntary psychiatric intervention because it is a violation of the individual's right to control his or her own soul, mind and body.

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4. We oppose forced psychiatric procedures such as drugging, electroshock, psychosurgery, restraints, solitary confinement, and "aversive behaviour modification".
5. We oppose forced psychiatric procedures because they humiliate, debilitate, injure, incapacitate and kill people.
6. We oppose forced psychiatric procedures because they are at best quackery and at worst tortures, which can and do cause sever and permanent harm to the total being of people subjected to them.

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7. We oppose the psychiatric system because it is inherently tyrannical.
8. We oppose the psychiatric system because it is an extra-legal parallel police force which suppresses cultural and political dissent.
9. We oppose the psychiatric system because it punishes individuals who have had or claim to have had spiritual experiences and invalidates those experiences by defining them as "symptoms" of "mental illness".
10. We oppose the psychiatric system because it uses the trappings of medicine and science to mask the social control function it serves.
11. We oppose the psychiatric system because it invalidates the real needs of poor people by offering social welfare under the guise of psychiatric "care and treatment".
12. We oppose the psychiatric system because it feeds on the poor and powerless, the elderly, women, children, sexual minorities, people of colour and ethnic groups.
13. We oppose the psychiatric system because it creates a stigmatized class of society which is easily oppressed and controlled.
14. We oppose the psychiatric system because its growing influence in education, the prisons, the military, government, industry and medicine threatens to turn society into a psychiatric state made up of two classes: those who impose "treatment" and those who have or are likely to have it imposed on them.
15. We oppose the psychiatric system because it is frighteningly similar to the Inquisition, chattel slavery, and the Nazi concentration camps.

iii

16. We oppose the medical model of "mental illness" because it justifies involuntary psychiatric intervention including forced drugging.
17. We oppose the medical model of "mental illness" because it dupes the public into seeking or accepting "voluntary" mental seeking or accepting "voluntary" treatment by fostering the notion that fundamental human problems, whether personal or social, can be solved by psychiatric/medical means.

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18. We oppose the use of psychiatric terms because they substitute jargon for plain English and are fundamentally stigmatizing, demeaning, unscientific, mystifying and superstitious. Examples:

Plain English

Psychiatric Jargon

Psychiatric inmate	Mental patient
Psychiatric institution	Mental hospital/Mental Health Center
Psychiatric system	Mental health system
Psychiatric procedure	Treatment/Therapy
Personal or social difficulties in living	Mental illness
Socially undesirable characteristic or trait	Symptom
Drugs	Medication
Drugging	Chemotherapy
Electroshock	Electroconvulsive Therapy
Anger	Hostility
Enthusiasm	Mania
Joy	Euphoria
Fear	Paranoia
Sadness/unhappiness	Depression
Vision/spiritual experience	Hallucination
Non-conformity	Schizophrenia
Unpopular belief	Delusion

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19. We believe that people should have the right to live in any manner or lifestyle they choose.
20. We believe that suicidal thoughts and/or attempts should not be dealt with as a psychiatric or legal issue.
21. We believe that alleged dangerousness, whether to oneself or others, should not be considered grounds for denying personal liberty, and that only proven criminal acts should be the basis for such denial.
22. We believe that persons charged with crimes should be tried for their alleged criminal acts with due process of law, and that psychiatric professionals should not be given expert witness status in criminal proceedings or courts of law.
23. We believe that there should be no involuntary psychiatric interventions in prisons and that the prison system should be reformed and humanized.
24. We believe that so long as one individual's freedom is unjustly restricted, no one is truly free.
25. We believe that the psychiatric system is, in fact, a pacification programme controlled by psychiatrists and supported by other mental health professionals, whose chief function is to persuade, threaten or force people into conforming to established norms and values.
26. We believe that the psychiatric system cannot be reformed but must be abolished.
27. We believe that voluntary networks of community alternatives to the psychiatric system should be widely encouraged and supported. Alternatives such as self-help or mutual support groups, advocacy/rights groups, co-op houses, crisis centers and drop-ins should be controlled by the users themselves to serve their needs, while ensuring their freedom, dignity and self-respect.

iii

28. We demand an end to involuntary psychiatric intervention.
29. We demand individual liberty and social justice for everyone.
30. We intend to make these words real and will not rest until we do.

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