

WHY OCCUPY WALL STREET SHOULD SUPPORT OCCUPY THE AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

May 5th, 2012, in Philadelphia, PA

On May 5, 2012, people who care about human rights will gather in Philadelphia for an event called Occupy the American Psychiatric Association ([Occupy the APA](#)). They are gathering to protest the approval of the latest version of psychiatry's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the *DSM-5*, which will label many more, often normal, human experiences and emotions as a "mental illness." They will also protest the way in which these labels are the springboard for human rights violations.

The Occupy movement seeks to help people regain control of their lives, which have been undermined by corporate domination. In the framework of conditions that make corporate abuse possible, the alliance between the psychiatric and pharmaceutical industries (PsychoPharmaceutical Complex) plays a key role.

As a participant in Occupy Sacramento said, "Why is this important to the 99%? The inordinate influence of Big Pharma in orchestrating decades of campaigns to expand force and coercion in mental health care is a high-profile example of how corporations continue to undermine democracy, human rights and dignity in their pursuit of ever-increasing profits."

Since the mid-20th century, in order to increase psychiatric and pharmaceutical profits, there has been a growing trend to medicalize and pathologize an ever wider range of human experience through ever more expansive editions of the *DSM*, and using these diagnoses to justify prescribing very harmful drugs. The result has been that people in the public mental health system are now [dying 25 years earlier on average than the rest of the population](#). Put simply, the psychiatric industry, led by the American Psychiatric Association, has teamed up with the pharmaceutical industry to sacrifice people's lives on the altar of profits. As reported by *Fortune* magazine, in one recent year 12 pharmaceutical companies made *almost 64 billion dollars!* Psychiatric drugs are leading these profits. This is done through pharmaceutical industry-funded, dishonest research that is accepted by the American Psychiatric Association to further its own agenda to increase its members' wealth and power.

If medications are not effective, or if a person does not want to take medications, more restrictive, invasive, and expensive measures may be taken, often against the will of the person supposedly being treated. At the same time, there are many individuals who find psychiatric medications helpful and make an informed choice to take them. We support everyone's right to make their own treatment choices.

The criteria for mental illness are detailed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and, with the 5th Edition about to be rubber-stamped by the American Psychiatric Association, many people who thought that they were just "having a hard time" may now be told that they have a serious mental disorder and will need to be medicated – like it or not. Everyone in the 99% is a potential victim because anyone can have experiences that get labeled as a mental illness. The 1% have the money to resist; the 99% do not.

This is why, on May 5, 2012, we will gather in Philadelphia to Occupy the APA! Join us!