

PsychRights®

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Katrina Victims Need Homes, Money, Jobs and Support -- Not Psychiatric Drugs

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The Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (PsychRights) urges those helping victims of Hurricane Katrina to provide what they really need: Homes, Money, Jobs and Support and not psychiatric drugs. Psychiatric drugs, contrary to pharmaceutical company marketing, are not as effective and far more dangerous than people have been led to believe.

Jim Gottstein, President of PsychRights said, "We know that psychiatric drugs have been a major contributor to the six-fold increase in the disability rate for mental illness. Let's not worsen the suffering by unnecessarily adding to the rolls of disabled people diagnosed with chronic mental illness."

The data shows that when neuroleptics, the drugs typically prescribed to people with serious mental illness, are given this drops the recovery rate from around 2/3rds to around 1/3rd, at best. Somewhere near 10% of people given anti-depressants have psychotic reactions, which is then often misdiagnosed as a biological mental illness and people put on the neuroleptics that turn them into being diagnosed as chronically mentally ill patients. The same sort of thing happens with the class of drugs known as benzodiazepines, such as Valium, Zanax and Restoril given to calm people down and help them sleep -- especially in longer term use. The same is true of the stimulants, such as Ritalin, given to people diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). "All of these drugs can be extremely hard to get off of," Mr. Gottstein noted, "even if they don't cause psychotic episodes."

People should be informed of the true, limited nature of the possible benefits of these drugs and informed of their very substantial risks. "Let's not compound the Katrina tragedy by lining the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies at the expense of people's long-term mental health. These people need homes, money, jobs and support, not drugs," reiterated Mr. Gottstein. "There is nothing better for people's mental health than a caring community where people's needs are taken care of."

The Law Project for Psychiatric Rights is a public interest law firm devoted to the defense of people facing the horrors of unwarranted forced psychiatric drugging and other forced psychiatric interventions. PsychRights is further dedicated to exposing the truth about psychiatric interventions and the courts being misled into ordering people subjected to these brain and body damaging drugs against their will. Extensive information about this is available on the PsychRights web site: <http://psychrights.org/>.

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