



Press Release

For immediate release

Protesters, Rejecting Mental Illness Labels, Vow to “Occupy” the American Psychiatric Association Convention

PHILADELPHIA (3/6/12) – On Saturday, May 5, 2012, as thousands of psychiatrists congregate in Philadelphia for the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Annual Meeting, individuals with psychiatric labels and other supporters will converge in a global campaign to oppose the APA’s proposed new edition of the [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders \(DSM-5\)](#), scheduled for publication in May 2013. [Occupy the APA](#) will include distinguished speakers from 10 a.m. to noon at Friends Center (1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia). A march at 1 p.m. from Friends Center will lead to the Pennsylvania Convention Center (12th and Arch Streets), where the group will protest beginning at 1:30 while the APA meets inside.

“This peaceful protest exposes the fact that the DSM-5 pushes the mental health industry to medicalize problems that aren’t medical, inevitably leading to over-prescription of psychiatric drugs – including for people experiencing [natural human emotions](#), such as grief and shyness,” said [David Oaks](#), founder and director of [MindFreedom International \(MFI\)](#), which has worked for 26 years as an independent voice of survivors of psychiatric human rights violations. “We call for better ways to help individuals in extreme emotional distress.”

Other speakers criticizing the revised manual, considered the psychiatric industry’s bible, include [Brent Robbins, Ph.D.](#), Secretary of the [Society for Humanistic Psychology](#), which has gathered more than 8,000 [signatures](#) from mental health professionals calling for “developing an alternative approach” to the DSM.

[Jim Gottstein, Esq.](#), founder and president of the Alaska-based Law Project for Psychiatric Rights ([PsychRights](#)), will cross the country to speak. “The public mental health system is creating a huge class of chronic mental patients through forcing them to take ineffective yet [extremely harmful drugs](#). As the APA gets ready to do even more harm with its proposed expansion of what constitutes mental illness, I want to be there in person to participate in the protest.”

[Occupy the APA](#) will begin at 10 a.m. at Friends Center (1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia), where the speakers will also include [Dr. Paula Caplan](#), a psychologist, playwright and activist from California; [Dr. Al Galves](#), director of the [International Society for Ethical Psychology & Psychiatry](#) (ISEPP); [Joseph Rogers](#), chief advocacy officer of the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania ([MHASP](#)); and [Dr. Stefan P. Kruszewski](#), a whistleblower who was fired by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare after he reported the abuse and deaths of Pennsylvania children as a result of systemic physical and psychiatric malfeasance. His subsequent [federal lawsuit](#) was successfully settled in 2007.

“We will promote humane alternatives to the traditional mental health system, such as [peer support](#), which evidence proves is effective in helping individuals recover from severe emotional distress,” Oaks said. “Our protest is about choice, and everyone is welcome.”

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