

## Common *myths* about mental and emotional problems

1. You have a “mental illness” that is caused by a biochemical imbalance, or some kind of brain defect or brain disease, or by a genetic predisposition.

2. The medication we give you will correct your “biochemical imbalance.”

3. “Recovery from mental illness” does not mean cure. Recovery just means learning to have a better life despite continuing to have the illness.

4. Mental health medications are proven to be effective and reasonably safe. When people who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness refuse medications, it is because they lack insight into their illness.

5. Because of your diagnosis, you will always have to take psychiatric medications.

6. If you have problems when you quit taking medications, this is proof you need to continue taking the medications.

7. If you really want to be healthy, you will take whatever medication your prescriber suggests, for the rest of your life.

8. If you do decide to get off medications, you cannot expect any help from your prescriber, whose job it is to keep you on your medications.

## What you would hear if your mental health system told you the *truth*

1. These are all theories. Science does not have proof of what causes mental and emotional problems. There is no lab test for any of these conditions. Also, none of these theories are able to explain how many people with mental and emotional problems recover completely.

2. Since no one knows if you have any “biochemical imbalance,” no one can promise to correct it!

3. There are varying degrees of recovery from mental and emotional problems. Some people recover just enough to improve their life while mental and emotional problems continue. But others go on to have a full recovery, and need no further mental health care.

4. The long term effectiveness of psychiatric medications has not been demonstrated in scientific studies. Even in the short term, some psychiatric drugs may not be any more effective than placebo. Many commonly used medications are quite dangerous, may potentially cause brain damage, and are part of the reason people in the USA public mental health system are dying 25 years earlier than average. Proven non-drug options exist but are not widely offered.

5. For each diagnosis, there are people who have gotten off the medications, and then gone on to have very successful lives.

6. Problems that arise upon quitting medications are often medication withdrawal effects, and can be minimized by tapering down slowly. Also, if you have been relying on medications to solve emotional problems, you may need to learn effective alternative solutions to these problems in order to accomplish a successful withdrawal.

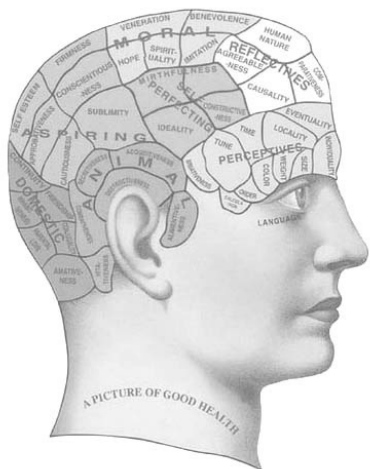
7. It's your choice. It is important not to stop taking medication before you are ready. But for at least some people, getting off medication, even against a prescriber's advice, may be the best solution. For example, long term studies show high rates of recovery among people diagnosed with “schizophrenia” who have gotten off medication successfully. Getting off medication can mean avoiding long term health risks (including risks of early death) associated with many of the medications.

8. Unless a court has taken your rights away, you have the right to decide to terminate any given treatment. Since the mental health system got you started on medications, it also has a responsibility to help you terminate that treatment as safely as possible if that is your choice.

## Learn the truth about mental health care

In this flyer you will find a grid comparing commonly distributed misinformation with the more accurate and hopeful picture that corresponds with scientific knowledge.

For references on this handout and more information about how to reduce reliance on psychiatric medications see [www.MindFreedom.org/truth](http://www.MindFreedom.org/truth)



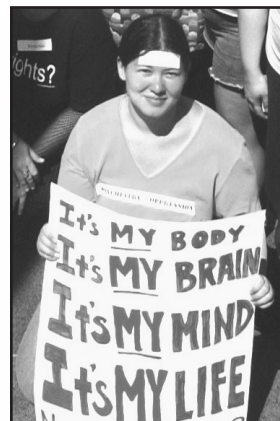
MindFreedom International (MFI) is an independent human rights organization that believes it is illegal for mental health systems to misinform clients. MFI asks all mental health systems to issue written guidelines and train staff to provide the truth. MFI believes it is your choice to take or not take prescribed psychiatric drugs, and you need complete information to make that choice.

## MindFreedom International

MindFreedom unites a coalition of more than 100 groups and thousands of individuals in a spirit of mutual cooperation. While most of us are psychiatric survivors, we are open to all who support human rights including psychiatric professionals, advocates, family members, and the general public.

MindFreedom is a totally independent group, with zero funding from the mental health system, governments, religious organizations, or drug companies. MFI is accredited by the United Nations with Consultative Roster Status.

MFI members benefit by access to member-only web pages, Internet forums, the *MindFreedom Journal*, a staffed office, and discounts on all MadMarket products and books. Members may activate free MindFreedom Shield alerts to help protect themselves from coerced psychiatry.



Join now on MindFreedom's site:  
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## Does Your Mental Health System Need A TRUTH Injection?



Your local mental health system may have a serious problem.

Your mental health provider is supposed to provide clients with accurate mental health information that would facilitate informed treatment decisions.

Instead, many mental health professionals routinely provide clients, their families, the media and even elected officials with misinformation that can increase reliance on prescribed psychiatric drugs.

This misinformation discourages people from believing they can learn to help themselves overcome problems. This misinformation increases passivity, hopelessness and even suicidality.

**MindFreedom International**