



Serving people with depression and manic depression, their families and friends since 1981

Weekly Support Groups

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
Groups begin at 7:30 p.m.

Manhattan West Side on Wednesdays

St. Luke's Roosevelt Adult Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic

411 West 114th St (bet. Amsterdam Ave. and Morning-side Drive.)

Manhattan East Side on Fridays

Beth Israel Medical Center, Bernstein Pavilion, 2nd floor,

Nathan Perlman Place (bet. 15th & 16th Streets, First & Second Aves)

Support groups allow participants to share their thoughts, feelings and personal experiences in small, confidential gatherings. Separate groups are available for:

- newcomers
- unipolar (depressive)
- bipolar (manic depressive)
- Under-30s
- family and friends.

Groups meet simultaneously. Support groups are free for members, and \$5 for nonmembers.

Upcoming Lectures of Note

Spring 2013

DOSED: The Medication Generation Grows Up

Kaitlin Bell Barnett

Author; Freelance writer for the Boston Globe, Observer, Huffington Post; blogger at PsychCentral.com

March 5, 2013



In the last two decades childhood psychiatric diagnoses have proliferated. Heated debates pop up frequently about the benefits and long-term implications of having young people take psychiatric medica-

tion. Yet little is heard from the medicated kids themselves.

That changed with Kaitlin Bell Barnett's recently-published book *Dosed*. Ma. Barnett, who started on antidepressants as a teenager, takes an in-depth look at what one psychopharmacologist calls this "giant, uncontrolled experiment". Her book weaves stories from the "medication generation" together, exploring how spending one's formative years

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Beyond Diagnoses: How Shared Experiences Challenge Assumptions about Recovery

Gail A. Hornstein, PhD.

Professor of Psychology, Mount Holyoke College; bestselling author; psychologist and historian of 20th-century psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis

May 14, 2013



Dr. Gail Hornstein has always been as interested in patients' experiences as in doctors' theories. Her bestselling book *Agnes's Jacket: A Psychologist's Search for the Meanings of Madness* raises significant questions about the traditional medical model and its pessimistic view of full recovery.

On May 14 Dr. Hornstein will share compelling research with us that shows that peer support and psychotherapy can be used successfully with even the most severe forms of mental disturbance. She will highlight the contributions of the international peer movement, including the Hearing Voices Network. This movement is helping thousands of people to understand their experiences and

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The Future of Brain Imaging: Customizing Treatment and Predicting Outcomes

Jeffrey Miller, M.D.

Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychiatry Columbia University/NY State Psychiatric Institute

April 9, 2013

Imagine a brain scan that could predict which kind of treatment will work best for your depression, and estimate the likelihood the treatment would work. Unrealistic? Maybe not.

Dr. Jeffrey Miller's clinical research aims to make this kind of prediction a reality. His focus is on using brain imaging techniques like PET scans and MRIs to understand the changes that occur in the brain when we get depressed. He hopes this knowledge will help

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Ask the Lawyer Marc Strauss, Esq.

Has the improvement in the economy had any effect on Social Security Disability Income claims?

It's probably not the economy, but we've recently seen an increase in the turnaround time for people who are waiting at the hearing level. More cases are being pulled out of the queue and sent to a special unit for review. When this happens, the claimant is given 10 days to submit additional evidence, and the case is expedited. The im-

portant lesson: if you've filed for SSDI make sure that you're under the care of a professional and keep your records current! Approval of benefits often hinges on being able to provide medical evidence that you have a disability.

Can children under the age of 18 get SSDI?

No, but they may be eligible for regular Social Security Income, if the family's household income meets the criteria for financial

need. An adult child between the ages of 18 and 22 may be eligible for "Adult Child Disability" if he or she has a parent who is deceased, retired, or disabled and the adult child can prove that his or her own disability began before age 22. In this case SSDI is based on the parent's employment record.

Any other big news?

Residents of Queens who have appeared at a hearing and been denied by certain

named administrative law judges in the past five years may get a second chance for a hearing. A recent class action lawsuit brought against the Queens Hearing Office resulted in an order to have the chief judge replaced and four other judges retrained. We won't know exactly what will happen until the plan is finalized by Federal judges, but once the settlement is accepted the Social Security Administration will send out notices to those people who are eligible to reapply.

Dosed lecture

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on medication affects one's life. How does being one of the "dosed" impact self-esteem, the quality of relationships, and belief in one's competence? What are the long-term implications of dealing with side-effects, changing diagnoses, relapse and stigma?

On March 5, Kaitlin Barnett will speak to us about her own experience and those of the hundreds of individuals she interviewed for her book. This is an opportunity for all of us who were diagnosed early in life (or have a loved one who was) understand more about how it has shaped us as adults and affected our lives.

The March lecture is the first in a series dedicated to young people, in memory of Ben Grayman. Many thanks to Robin Faine.

Future of Brain Imaging lecture

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us predict outcomes with more certainty, and give us insight into which medications and cognitive therapies will work best for each of us.

How far away from this goal are we? Not as far as you might think. Join us on April 9 for an update on the progress Dr. Miller and his colleagues are making.

Beyond Diagnoses lecture

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help each other recover. Join us as Dr. Hornstein challenges our assumptions and beliefs about suffering and healing, and offers an alternative and optimistic view of the changing landscape of mental health today.

What's in the MDSG Web Site?

If you haven't been to MDSG.org lately, you may be missing out. Aside from being a great source of lecture dates when you misplace your copy of MOODS, the site has lots of great information. Visit us to find:

- **Announcements;**
- copies of recent and past **newsletters;**
- a fabulous list of **resources** including info on how to find trustworthy sources online, drug information, online discussion forums, and advocacy groups;
- **links** to other online sites that may be helpful to you.

Take a look!

Mood Disorders Support Group
New York
MOODS
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Inquire about bulk orders.
MDSG is affiliated with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.

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The Reader's Corner

Betsy Naylor

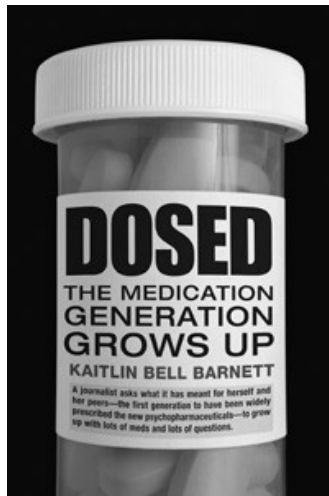
Dosed : The Medication Generation Grows Up

by Kaitlin Bell Barnett
Beacon Press, 2012

Children often suffer from the same symptoms of depression, anxiety, obsessions, compulsions, and attention deficit disorder as adults. Psychotropic drugs are prescribed for all these problems. But what happens when school-age children take Ritalin, Zanax, Prozac, Zyprexa, Depacote or other drugs? In *Dosed*, author Kaitlin Bell Barnett takes a comprehensive look at this 21st Century phenomenon.

The author follows five young people as they describe their life experiences. The profiles begin with their first diagnosis and first prescription. She also writes about her own life, living with depression (and a Prozac prescription) starting at age 17. One suspects her personal experience influenced her choice of inquiry for this book.

The haranguing thoughts of mental illness, which can often be lessened by medication, do their own damage. But the additional worry about drug poop-out and dependence weigh heavily on a young mind. Kids question themselves: *Could I read as fast if I weren't taking Ritalin? Is this a normal feeling, or is it a side effect? How can I know who I really am if I'm taking these drugs all the time?* Medication can add its own



set of issues, causing flat affect that dampens social skills, obesity, and confusion about sense of self.

One well-known controversy about medicating children has focused on Ritalin, which treats the symptoms of ADHD. When a stimulant is working, school kids are able to calm down and learn. The effect can be profound; one child in the book says, "When I am taking it, teachers treat me like anyone else." While this may be a plus, some kids feel that the pill determines their behavior: they attribute good behavior to the pill, and out-of-control times to forgetting to take it. This can lead to a distorted view of how to take responsibility for their own actions. One medicated child had such huge misunderstandings about himself and his relationships with others that he thought his teacher was giving him extra time (a standard accommodation for ADHD students) because she liked him.

SSRI's are known for their sexual side effects. If a teenager begins on an SSRI before sexual feelings begin to emerge, then later on (when peers make a fuss about sex) the unknowing pill taker has no clue what is going on. An essential part of growing up has been cancelled out.

Kaitlin Bell Barnett interviewed dozens of people about growing up on medication. Most of these people believed that drugs had "made them more stable, motivated, focused, reliable, or upbeat." And yet they were still ambivalent about issues like "what side effects the medications caused and how to understand their identity while taking a drug that affected their mood, behavior, and maybe even their entire personality."

Many of us in MDSG began our psychiatric journey when we were young. Those in the medication generation will identify with the kids in *Dosed*. The book is also of interest to parents whose children currently take medication. But even if you're not in either group, this is a book worth reading. It's not tirade against (or for) medication, but a nuanced view of what kids go through, and how their disease and medications affect how they grow up.

Note: Kaitlin Bell Barnett will be speaking to MDSG on March 5, 2013. See announcement on page 1.

"...some kids feel that the pill determines their behavior: they attribute good behavior to the pill, and out-of-control times to forgetting to take it."

The Mood Disorders Support Group

Upcoming Lectures — Spring 2012-13

Held at the Podell Auditorium, Bernstein Pavilion, Beth Israel Medical Center

Enter at Nathan Perlman Place between First and Second Avenues and 15th and 16th St. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. \$4 for members, \$8 for non-members.

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| March 5
Tuesday
7:30 p.m. | DOSED: The Medication Generation Grows Up
Kaitlin Bell Barnett, <i>Author; Freelance writer</i> | What effect does growing up medicated have on children? A fascinating look at the complicated issues surrounding growing up “Dosed”. |
| April 9
Tuesday
7:30 p.m. | The Future of Brain Imaging: Customizing Treatment and Predicting Outcomes
Jeffrey Miller, M.D., <i>Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychiatry Columbia University/NY State Psychiatric Institute</i> | How far are we from being able to predict which kinds of treatments will work best to treat depression? A sneak peek at exciting developments in brain imaging. |
| May 14
Tuesday
7:30 p.m. | Beyond Diagnoses: How Shared Experiences Challenge Assumptions about Recovery
Gail A. Hornstein, PhD, <i>Professor of Psychology, Mount Holyoke College; psychologist and historian of 20th-century psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis</i> | How important — and effective — is peer support in recovery? There’s research that tells us, and which may alter our understanding of what may help us most. |

Weekly Support Groups

**Manhattan West Side
Wednesdays**

St. Luke’s Roosevelt Adult Outpatient
Psychiatric Clinic

411 West 114th Street
(between Amsterdam and Morningside)

**Manhattan East Side/Downtown
Fridays**

Beth Israel Medical Center, Bernstein Pavilion, 2nd
floor

Nathan Perlman Place (between 15th & 16th
Streets, and First & Second Aves)

MDSG Membership

Send your check, payable to **MDSG, Inc.** to: MDSG, Inc., P.O. Box 30377, New York, NY 10011

_____ \$45 Individual Annual Membership _____ \$65 Family Annual Membership
Is this a renewal? Yes No

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Your contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support.

Depression Sees No Borders Li Faustino, PhD

In 1996 I showed up at an MDSG group, saddened and concerned about a family member. Soon I trained and ran groups, founded the group for young people, and led one of the sites. Over the years I've had various roles at MDSG including recruiting, teaching and training volunteers to answering phones, and raising money. Today I still sit on the board of directors.

The bulk of my time and focus has been on what is now called the Under-30 group. When that group started in 1997 it had six people in it. Each week it grew until it became so big it was split in two, and was the biggest group of its kind in the country. Each week brought newcomers who assimilated with those who

had come the weeks before. They had Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizoaffective Disorder. Their stories had different details, but the same overarching theme: they were suffering. Some group members were piecing their lives back together after horrendous episodes. Some had just started treatment and walked straight from the hospital to the group. Some went from the group straight to the hospital. Many were figuring out how to explain their illness to their families, or grappling with when (or if) to tell a prospective partner about it. People talked, shared, suffered together. I saw the work of a support group at its best.

It is now 2013. I have completed my doctoral degree in

clinical psychology. I no longer run support groups. I work in a different state. I sit in my office and see people with a myriad of difficulties. Very often someone comes in and – because of my years with MDSG – I know what I am seeing. They are just the right age, and I recognize the suffering, the isolation, the pain. I see their struggle to keep hope alive. I swallow the reality that mood disorders know no boundaries and have no borders. They hit people everywhere.

I wish I could send all these people to MDSG, where I witnessed so many people making progress toward recovery. For although psychotherapy and medication are often the centerpieces of successful treatment, the

power of a solid support group should never be underestimated. People *need* to discuss the issues that go along with managing their lives with a mood disorder. Recovery is far easier when you can talk openly about relationships, family, stigma, taking medication, identity, school and work, sleep, and the challenges of having a social life. Within the safety of an MDSG support group, people get ideas – and get empowered. I'm grateful for how MDSG has enriched my life. I wish it to enrich many others.

Movie: Silver Lining Playbook

How often have you seen a Academy Award-nominated movie in which one main character has Bipolar Disorder, and another OCD? It doesn't happen frequently!

One of the interesting aspects of "Silver Lining Playbook", which stars Bradley Cooper, Robert De Niro and Jennifer Lawrence, is that the characters' emotional struggles and mental illnesses affect the plot but don't define who they are. In other words, the movie is about people who face an obstacle that has to be dealt with and overcome, and that obstacle happens to be a mental illness.

Dr. Jeffrey Lieberman, chair of psychiatry at Columbia University and the president-elect of the American Psychiatric Association, thinks that "Silver Lining Playbook" will help to decrease stigma, because its message is "that mental illness affects ordinary people in normal domestic settings." Do you agree? Disagree? Watch the movie, and let us know!

Send us your movie review at Info@MDSG (please put "Movie Review" in the subject heading) and we'll choose some excerpts to include in our next newsletter.

ME2, a Bipolar Orchestra

BBC News recently ran a piece about Ronald Braunstein, a conductor whose highly successful career was derailed by Bipolar Disorder. One of the major obstacles Braunstein faced was stigma: orchestras didn't understand (and didn't care to understand) the nature of his illness.

What makes this news is that Braunstein has gone on to do something new. He's put his Juilliard training to good use, and has founded a stigma-free orchestra in Vermont for amateur musicians who have mental illnesses.

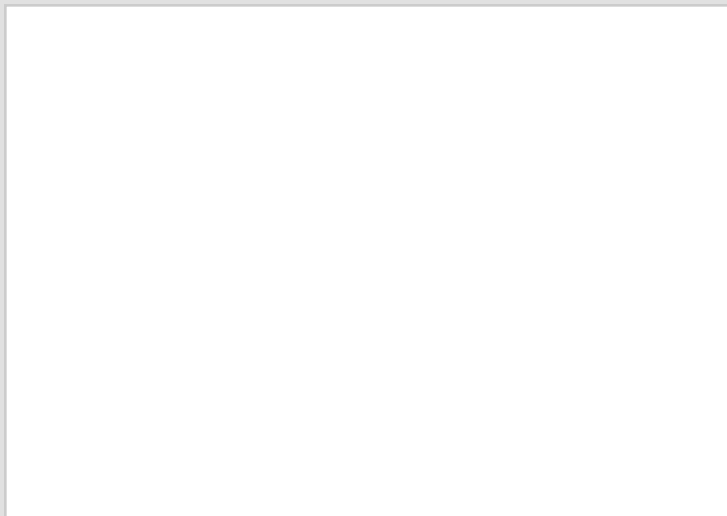
Known as ME2, the group

focuses on making music in order to bring beauty into the world – and confidence into their lives. Participation is open to anyone who suffers from a mental illness, their families, and friends. No audition is required.

You can learn more about ME2 by visiting their web site at me2orchestra.org. There's a link on the site so you can watch the BBC "First Person" segment about the group, too.

Next up... New York?

MDSG, Inc.
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New York, NY 10011



Stay Healthy, Keep MDSG Healthy

We all know it takes a huge amount of work to keep ourselves stable and healthy. MDSG plays a key role in supporting us in those efforts. The cost of membership and lecture admission doesn't come close to covering our expenses. Your financial support is crucial. Please give what you can.

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