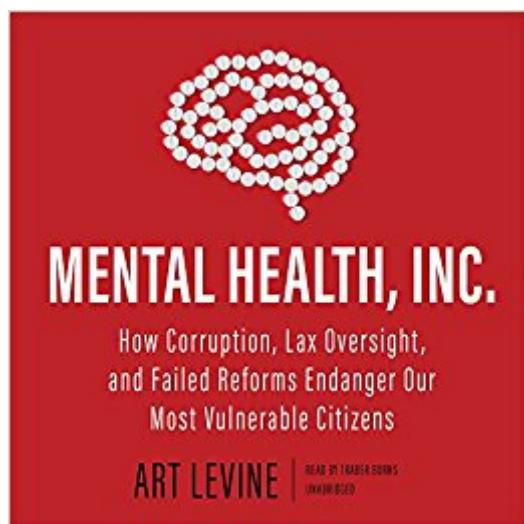


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# **Mental Health, Inc. : How Corruption, Lax Oversight, And Failed Reforms Endanger Our Most Vulnerable Citizens**



## Synopsis

[Read by Traber Burns]Prize-winning investigative journalist Art Levine offers a no-holds-barred and crucial call to action for America's broken mental health system. The mental health system in America is hardly a front-burner issue, despite lip-service about reform after a tragic mass killing. Yet every American should care deeply about fixing a system a presidential commission reported was in "shambles." By some measures, about 20 percent of Americans have some sort of mental health condition, including the most vulnerable among us veterans, children, the elderly, prisoners, and the homeless. With Mental Health, Inc., award-winning investigative journalist Art Levine delivers a Shock Doctrine-style exposé of the failures of our out-of-control, profits-driven mental health system, with a special emphasis on the failures of the pharmaceuticals industry, including the treatment of children with antipsychotics and disastrous PTSD protocols for veterans. Levine provides narrative portraits of victims and people who won unexpected victories against their illnesses by getting smart, personalized help, as well as snapshots of corrupt Big Pharma executives and researchers who created fraudulent marketing schemes. Levine also tells the dramatic David vs. Goliath stories of a few brave reformers, including Harvard-trained psychiatrist and researcher Dr. Stefan Kruszewski, who has acted as a whistleblower in numerous cases, leading to major federal and state settlements, as well as spotlighting pioneering clinicians challenging outmoded, drug-and-sedate practices that leave 90 percent of people with serious mental illness too disabled to work. By taking a comprehensive look at mental health abuses and dangerous, ineffective practices as well as pointing toward solutions for creating a system for effective, proven, and compassionate care, Art Levine's essential Mental Health, Inc. is a call to action for politicians and citizens alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"InÃ  Mental Health Inc., Art Levine presents a convincing case that corruption and failed political policies have waylaid our mental health system and led to great harm. His reporting on successful programs point to a way out of this morass, if only we can find the societal will to pursue such change." --Robert Whitaker, New York Times bestselling author of *Anatomy of an Epidemic* and *Mad In America* "Mental Health, Inc. is a deep investigation of the horrifying inadequacy and dangerous practices that are all-too-common in our so-called health care system. An important and compelling plea for humane reforms." --Maia Szalavitz, New York Times bestselling author of *The Unbroken Brain* "[A] trenchant exposÃ© . . . While lauding judicious medication, Levine takes aim at endemic drug-and-sedate practices. He sees hope in institutional reform, peer-to-peer counseling and innovations in de-stigmatizing therapies for post-traumatic stress disorder." --Nature "Art Levine has devoted decades to understanding the politics, science, and economics of health. Mental Health, Inc. is the culmination of that work, presenting an original and convincing case about the failures of the mental health industrial complex in general and the Department of Veteran Affairs in particular. This book is in the classic non-partisan, fact-based exposÃ© tradition and deserves wide attention." --James Fallows, National Correspondent, *The Atlantic* "Mental Health, Inc. is a hard hitting text exposing hard-to-swallow realities within the underbelly of the mental health industry and its relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Disabled veterans have long been the tip of the spear for risky, off-label drug treatments within the industry. Levine unearths uncomfortable truths in the system that explain why." --Benjamin Krause, JD, Chief Editor, *Disabledveterans.org* "This well-researched book reveals the scope of an entrenched problem, but it also offers hope . . . Reading Levine's work might very well be the key to spurring concerned stakeholders into action." --Publishers Weekly "An alarming report on the dire state of our nation's mental health care industry . . . Amid a surfeit of drug company scandals, lawsuits, and blatant wrongdoings, Levine's compelling exposÃ© brings the contemporary state of mental health care into stark focus. But it also offers redemption and hope in the form of modern-day heroes armed with proactive recovery programs and alternative therapies. An urgent, balanced, eye-opening plea for mental health care reform." --Kirkus "Mental Health, Inc." is gripping in the sense that you'll literally grip the book tightly in both hands as you read this horrifying account of our twisted mental health system. Author Art Levine has tirelessly researched stories of individuals whom our system

has failed . . . and he is a crusader on a mission to hold executives and bureaucrats accountable."

--New York Journal of Books

Art Levine, a prize-winning contributing editor of the Washington Monthly and a Nation Institute Investigative Fund grantee, has written for the American Prospect, Salon, the Atlantic, and numerous other publications. In 2001 he was honored as Journalist of the Year by the Florida chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

Mental Health, Inc. by Art Levine made me angry about how psychoactive drugs are being misused, especially on our veterans. The book documents how thousands of people are being overmedicated and forced to live without any meaning or purpose. The most vulnerable citizens that Mr. Levine considers are troubled teens, veterans who risked their lives for our country, and old people in nursing homes. He supports his views with a mixture of numbers and personal stories. Before I read this informative book, I already had some interest in the subject, as I was a patient in a mental ward back in the 60's. I was in a locked mental ward for a month. In that month I had to take Thorazine-type drugs, among others. None of the professional staff talked to me or the other patients. There was no group or individual therapy. My doctor did not even say 25 words to me the whole month. We all just sat around; however the place was clean and we were fed well. When I left, I was threatened with more hospitalizations if I did not continue to take my meds every day for the rest of my life. So my mental illness took me from a Dean's list college student and varsity wrestler to a guy sitting in a chair in his parent's house. I just wanted to die. I was studying to be a science teacher. Life as I knew it was gone. I am old now, but I can look back on a productive life of teaching science, coaching wrestling, raising a family, and doing volunteer work. I was blessed. Most with my background go on to lifelong medication and disability. It must be noted that my recovery was not paid for by taxpayers or insurance companies. Support groups thrive on minimal donations from members. The author of Mental Health, Inc describes the fate of many people like me. He maintains that we should treat mentally ill with programs that work. There is much talent/potential that is ruined with the drug culture of our medical profession and drug companies. I knew the drug companies were making huge profits with the medicines they promote

for mental illness. I guessed that there might be some side effects. However, Mr. Levine detailed how many seemed to have died directly or indirectly from these drugs. One of the end results of these medicines are suicides because patients may pick up huge amounts of weight, diabetes from the weight gain, and little relief from the medications. I was unaware of the number of lawsuits that were brought against the mental health industry for the harm they caused, and surprised that so many were settled on the side of the patient (or his relatives). Of course in the American justice system, no one ever admits guilt, but they pay to the tune of millions of dollars. We do not hear much about these cases because the lawyers often add clauses to the settlements forbidding any talk. Mental health is big business in America. There are many clinics/camps for troubled teens. Nursing homes use drugs to make older patients more docile and uncomplaining. The VA system puts many of our vets who are struggling with PTSD, bipolar, and other disorders on high doses of drugs—many that are off-label, thus never proven to work. Besides the overuse of drugs, patients are greatly harmed by companies in this industry that amplify their profits by not training staff, by not paying the workers much, and by cutting staff. All these abuses seem unbelievable, but Art Levine has thoroughly documented them. If you read the whole book, you will probably get sick to the stomach hearing about what is being done to our most vulnerable in our society.

Mental Health Inc. tells it like it is! After you read this book join the mental health care revolution and donate to the Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health Care to help us change how research and programs are funded.

This is investigative reporting at its best. Well written, Art Levine has written the most important book in years about mental health policy and the realities, on the ground, about how the system works, and does NOT work. This book is a must for anyone involved. or who cares about mental health, a subject which is too often ignored in mainstream discourse.

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