



Healing the Mind, Body & Spirit Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”. Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter October 2022

Hi folks,

Welcome to the October edition of the Surviving Spirit Newsletter.

Please consider a visit my You Tube Channel. I am a musician, writer and an advocate addressing the impact of trauma, abuse and mental health challenges & injuries. I believe there is Hope, Healing & Help for all of us who have been affected. My aim is to share resources and lessons I have learned of how trauma, abuse and the challenges of mental health have consequences for not only us as individuals but our families, friends, colleagues and society.

I am not a doctor or a therapist - but I have the lived experience of dealing with the pain and the horror of child abuse - sexual, physical, emotional and neglect along with the struggles of mild traumatic brain injury. I survived and I have learned to thrive in life.

I have found peace, safety and love - we all deserve this. The purpose of this You Tube Channel and my websites are to share resources and insights to help improve our lives and address the inter-generational cycle of trauma that has affected society for far too long.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/MichaelSkinnerMusic/featured>

Thank you, Michael Skinner

“If the world seems cold to you, kindle fires to warm it.” - Lucy Larcom

“You cannot seek water from the one who drained your seas, and you cannot build a home for your worth inside of another being. The medicine is when you return to yourself where you will remember your strength, reclaim your own rhythm, and write your new song.” Victoria Erickson

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- 1] [The people making a difference: the mental health campaigner on the truth about personality disorders](#) by [Sirin Kale](#) in Life and style - The Guardian

After being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, Katja Pavlovna co-founded the Sorry My Mental Illness Isn't Sexy Enough For You website to help others.

Katja Pavlovna doesn't think any mental illness is sexy, of course. But her mental health initiative, [Sorry My Mental Illness Isn't Sexy Enough For You](#), addresses a very real issue, namely the way some conditions carry a greater stigma than others.

“When we think about mental health,” says Pavlovna, “we often think depression, anxiety, PTSD or bipolar disorder. But have you ever talked to someone about schizotypal personality disorder?”

Pavlovna, 34, a language teacher from the West Midlands, founded the project in 2021, shortly after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD). “I set it up with my friend Kay Garbett, who also has a personality disorder,” she says. “We had numerous conversations about the way that if you Google ‘personality disorder’, you get loads of information, but few stories about lived experience. We set up the project to give a voice to people who don't normally have one.”

Their website shares anonymous first-person testimony from people all over the world living with a mental illness. At first, people in their social circle shared their experiences but now, most of their stories come in through social media. [Read the entire article](#)

1a] [Lives Not Labels - Sorry my mental illness isn't sexy enough for you](#). - Welcome to our website!

We designed this to be a space for anyone with a mental health condition. Especially if it's not a very sexy one.

In all seriousness, there are mental health conditions out there that we all know that people would like to pretend don't exist. And we know, because we have them. We know what it feels like to be stigmatised, discriminated against and misunderstood, whether people intend to do it or not. Either way, it feels pretty rubbish. And if we feel rubbish, we bet you do too.

1b] [More stories of people making a difference](#) by Sirin Kale @ The Guardian

“You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was Dostoevsky and Dickens who taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who ever had been alive.

“Only if we face these open wounds in ourselves can we understand them in other people. An artist is a sort of emotional or spiritual historian.” - James Baldwin

*“A sexually abused child usually lives within a network of relationships that are in reality only pretense. This child is an accepted member of the family system *only* as long as she/he pretends nothing is wrong.” - Diane Langberg*

2] [8 Foods That Contribute to Anxiety and Depression](#) by [Susan McQuillan](#) @ Psychology Today - ... and how to limit or avoid products that can jeopardize mood.

Key points

- Some foods are likely to affect your levels of anxiety and depression more than others.
- Commercially processed foods can negatively affect your mental health.
- Common junk foods are the worst offenders; they contain too much sugar or unhealthy fats, and are nutritionally depleted.

When university and medical school researchers from North and South America* set out to explore the theory that processed foods contribute to poor mental health, they found ultra-processed foods (UPF) to be the worst offenders. Ultra-processed foods are commercially prepared convenience food products that contain little to no whole food ingredients, often lack essential nutrients, and often contain additives, such as flavorings, colorings, and other products that make the food more appealing to consumers. In other words, they in no way resemble the original food sources from which they are made.

UPF products are generally quick and easy to prepare or ready to eat out of their packaging, and they are often less expensive than whole foods, especially when they are available from generic or store brands. That helps explain why more than 70 percent of all packaged foods sold in the United States are deemed UPF, and those food products represent around 60 percent of all calories consumed in this country.

Upon review of self-reported, nationally representative dietary records of more than 10,000 men and women age 18 and older, the study authors were able to name the eight UPFs most commonly consumed. These include:

- Sugar-sweetened drinks
- Reconstituted meat products
- Packaged snack foods
- Chips
- Breakfast cereals
- Cookies
- Cake
- Bread

The researchers also collected data from the participants to measure three specific mental health symptoms: general mild [depression](#), number of anxious days, and number of mentally unhealthy days. They found that those participants who reportedly consumed the most UPFs had a significantly higher rate of mild depression and reported significantly more anxious and mentally unhealthy days.

[Read the entire article](#)

“Healing takes time, and you walk that path in your own way. Not because someone else told you what healing looks like for them, but because your heart showed you what it feels like for you.” - Jennifer Healey

“Feelings are much like waves, we can’t stop them from coming but we can choose which ones to surf.” – Jonatan Martensson

3] [Many U.S. veterans land behind bars. A unique, new law may change that.](#) by [Melissa Chan](#) @ NBC

News

It is a critical time to turn the tide for millions of post-9/11 veterans, advocates say, as many struggle to put the Iraq and Afghanistan wars behind them.

Tony Miller killed countless enemy forces while deployed in Iraq, where his Army unit captured so many high-value targets that they received a valor award.

“Violence was good,” said Miller, a paratrooper, who was sent back to Iraq just 17 days after returning home from his first deployment. “Violence was rewarded.”

But once he left the military in 2008, Miller's aggression was no longer an asset, and he was consumed by anger, exacerbated by untreated post-traumatic stress disorder. He was charged with second-degree assault with a firearm in 2014 and convicted soon after of felony drug possession - the consequences of which threatened to permanently derail any chance he had of resuming a productive life as a civilian.

In an alarming statistic, roughly one-third of U.S. military veterans say they have been arrested and jailed at least once in their lives, compared to fewer than one-fifth of civilians, a [report](#) released last month by the Council on Criminal Justice found. The nonpartisan think tank cited service-related trauma, including PTSD, and substance abuse issues as some of the driving factors.

Now, advocates say, a unique, new Minnesota law may turn the tide at a critical point for millions of post-9/11 veterans, as many struggle to put the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War, the nation's longest war, behind them.

Last August, Minnesota became the first state to allow veterans with service-related trauma to avoid serving time for certain crimes, while ensuring a conviction does not stain their record.

The Veterans Restorative Justice Act is not a get-out-of-jail-free card, and the measure does not show leniency to serious violent crimes, such as murder and manslaughter. But supporters say it is a compassionate way to hold veterans accountable for many less-severe cases, including theft and DWI, while treating underlying issues, such as PTSD.

“Some of those emotions are really raw,” said Miller, 39, who lives in Farmington, Minnesota, with his wife and dogs. [Read the entire article](#)

“Be careful who you invest your time into.” - Unknown

“Letting go is not giving up. Letting go is surrendering any obsessive attachment to particular people, outcomes and situations.” - Melchor Lim

4] [Mental Illness Is Not in Your Head](#) by Marco Ramos @ [Boston Review](#)

Decades of biological research haven't improved diagnosis or treatment. We should look to society, not to the brain.

“These books invite us to imagine a future where the billions invested in biological research are instead redistributed to the communities who need it most.” - Marco Ramos

[*Mind Fixers: Psychiatry's Troubled Search for the Biology of Mental Illness*](#) - Anne Harrington
W. W. Norton, \$17.95 (paper)

[*Desperate Remedies: Psychiatry's Turbulent Quest to Cure Mental Illness*](#) -Andrew Scull
Harvard University Press, \$35 (cloth)

In 1990 President George Bush [announced](#) that “a new era of discovery” was “dawning in brain research.” Over the next several decades the U.S. government poured billions of dollars into science that promised to revolutionize our understanding of psychiatric disorders, from depression and bipolar disorder to schizophrenia. Scientists imagined that mental illnesses in the future might be diagnosed with genetic tests, a simple blood draw, or perhaps a scan of your brain. New pharmaceuticals would target specific neurochemical imbalances, resulting in more effective treatments. The 1990s, Bush declared, would be remembered as “[The Decade of the Brain](#).”

This brave new world of brain research also promised to free us of the stigma and discrimination attached to mental illness and addiction for centuries. Localizing psychiatric disorders in the brain would make them chronic medical diseases—like diabetes and high cholesterol—instead of individual moral failings or deficiencies in character. While it was impossible to predict exactly what the future would bring, there was an overwhelming sense that psychiatric science was going to crack the “mystery” and “wonder” of this “incredible organ,” as Bush called it.

Looking back as a psychiatrist and historian today, I find that these hopes feel quaint. They remind me of other misplaced visions of technological futures from the twentieth century: flying cars, pills for a whole day's nutrition. The reality of psychiatric practice is far less glamorous than the visions of its future that I grew up with. Thirty years later we still have no biological tests for psychiatric disorders, and none is in the pipeline. Instead our diagnoses are based on criteria in a book, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (often called, derisively, the “bible” of American psychiatry). It has gone through five editions in the last 70 years, and while the latest edition is almost 100 pages longer than the last, there is no evidence that it is any better than the version it replaced. None of the diagnoses is defined in terms of the brain.

We also have not had any significant breakthroughs in treatment. For decades the pharmaceutical industry has churned out dozens of antidepressants and antipsychotics, but there is no evidence that they are more effective than the drugs that emerged between 1950 and 1990. People with serious mental illness today are more likely to be [homeless](#) or die prematurely than at any point in the last 150 years, with [lifespans](#) that are 10 to 20 years less than the general population. Biological research has also failed to reveal *why* psychiatric drugs help some patients but not others. When a patient asks me how an antidepressant works, I have to shrug my shoulders. “We just don't know, but we do have evidence that there's about a 30 percent chance that it will help your mood.” Perplexed, one patient responded, “Doesn't it have to do with neurotransmitters or something?” I sighed, “Yes, that was the theory for a while, but it didn't pan out.”

[Read the entire article](#)

[Marco Ramos, MD, PhD](#), is a historian of medicine and psychiatry resident at Yale University. His historical research focuses on mental health activism and revolutionary politics in Latin America. Find

him on Twitter @Mramos_histmed.

“Childhood should be carefree, playing in the sun; not living a nightmare in the darkness of the soul.”
- Dave Pelze

“I feel that there is nothing more truly artistic than to love people.” - Vincent Van Gogh

5] [4-7-8 breathing: How to use the technique for sleep or anxiety](#) by Kristen Rogers @ CNN

Falling asleep or coming down from anxiety might never be as easy as 1-2-3, but some experts believe a different set of numbers – 4-7-8 – comes much closer to doing the trick.

The 4-7-8 technique is a relaxation exercise that involves breathing in for four counts, holding that breath for seven counts and exhaling for eight counts, said Dr. Raj Dasgupta, a clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Southern California’s Keck School of Medicine, via email.

Also known as the “relaxing breath,” 4-7-8 has ancient roots in pranayama, which is the yogic practice of breath regulation, but was popularized by integrative medicine specialist [Dr. Andrew Weil](#) in 2015.

“What a lot of sleep difficulties are all about is people who struggle to fall asleep because their mind is buzzing,” said Rebecca Robbins, an instructor in medicine at Harvard Medical School and associate scientist in the division of sleep and circadian disorders at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. “But exercises like the 4-7-8 technique give you the opportunity to practice being at peace. And that’s exactly what we need to do before we go to bed.”

“It does not ‘put you to sleep,’ but rather it may reduce anxiety to increase likelihood of falling asleep,” said Joshua Tal, a New York state-based clinical psychologist.

The 4-7-8 method doesn’t require any equipment or specific setting, but when you’re initially learning the exercise, you should sit with your back straight, according to Weil. Practicing in a calm, quiet place could help, said Robbins. Once you get the hang of it, you can use the technique while lying in bed.

During the entire practice, place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue behind your upper front teeth, as you’ll be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue. Then follow these steps, according to Weil:

- Completely exhale through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and quietly inhale through your nose to a mental count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale through your mouth, making a whoosh sound for a count of eight.
- Repeat the process three more times for a total of four breath cycles.

Keeping to the ratio of four, then seven and then eight counts is more important than the time you spend on each phase, according to Weil.

“If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep the ratio (consistent) for the

three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply,” his website advised.

When you’re stressed out, your sympathetic nervous system – responsible for your fight-or-flight response – is overly active, which makes you feel overstimulated and not ready to relax and transition into sleep, Dasgupta said. “An active sympathetic nervous system can cause a fast heart rate as well as rapid and shallow breathing.”

What research shows - The 4-7-8 breathing practice can help activate your parasympathetic nervous system – responsible for resting and digesting – which reduces sympathetic activity, he added, putting the body in a state more conducive to restful sleep. Activating the parasympathetic system also gives an anxious brain something to focus on besides “why am I not sleeping?” Tal said.

[Read the entire article](#) Please note - Optimize Your breathing with these tips video posted also.

5a] [Dr. Weil explains how to do his 4-7-8 breathing technique](#). Relaxing Breathing Exercise – YouTube 2:21 minutes

“Healing yourself is connected with healing others.” – Yoko Ono

“It is better for someone to break your heart once by leaving your life, than for them to stay in your life and break your heart continually.” - Terry Mark

6] [How Hawaii brought its population of girls in prison to zero](#) By Christopher Cicchiello @ NBC News

A focus on rehabilitation and building a support system, including addressing past traumas, led to the success - and could be a model for other states, experts say.

Hawaii reached the milestone earlier this year of having no girls in its only youth correctional facility — a first in state history, officials say.

It was a jubilant moment for the facility’s administrator, Mark Patterson, who has worked to reduce the youth prison population for nearly eight years.

A decade ago, more than 100 adolescents were imprisoned at the facility. When Patterson arrived two years later, the number had dropped by about half, according to data from the state's Department of the Attorney General and Office of Youth Services.

For Patterson, who came to the youth facility after running Hawaii’s Women’s Community Correctional Center, reducing the girls population required decreasing the number of young people put on probation, as violators often got sent to his facility. It also meant addressing the fact that they were the “most vulnerable of the high-risk” and often had suffered heavy trauma related to things like sexual exploitation, abuse at home or exposure to drug addiction, he said.

“When I talk about zero girls in the system, it’s because it was a conscious effort to focus on a particular profile of girls in our systems,” Patterson said.

Patterson and other state officials and juvenile justice reform advocates set out to keep at-risk youth from engaging in behaviors that get them sent into the system in the first place, an effort that, when applied broadly, helped reduce overall female probation sentences by more than two-thirds from 2014 to 2021, according to the state Department of the Attorney General. Experts say Hawaii can be a model for other states on how to institute alternatives to the more traditional punitive models of justice for girls and boys.

A new path - Since 2001, the number of girls in residential placement settings nationally, which include correctional facilities and shelters, has trended downward, according to [2019 data](#) from the criminal justice reform group the Sentencing Project. But while girls account for about 15% of incarcerated youth, they make up about a third of those locked up for low-level status offenses like truancy or curfew violations - a problem Hawaii has confronted head-on.

[With Project Kealahou](#), Hawaiian for "the new pathway," the state's Department of Health aimed to address prevalent trauma in "at-risk" girls through community-based services like peer mentoring and therapeutic intervention focused on repairing family relationships.

The six-year, federally funded effort was modeled on an earlier program, Girl's Court, that sought to address the needs of at-risk girls and juvenile offenders by providing them with a supportive environment and positive role models, including in recreational settings. Project Kealahou also used youth development programs to offer activities, like hula dance groups and paddling classes, as part of its "trauma-informed care" — a model that recognizes the impact that trauma has had on incarcerated youth and how coping mechanisms and criminal activity often intersect.

Because the power dynamic in prisons can resemble abusive relationships, trauma-informed care tries to ensure that incarcerated adolescents don't [re-experience past damaging experiences](#), and to that end it provides [guidelines](#) that seek to foster mutual respect among youths, caregivers and justice system officials as well as collaboration between therapists and correctional officers on how to interact with inmates.

[Read the entire article](#)

"It sucks when you know that you need to let go, but you can't, because your still waiting for the impossible to happen." - Unknown

"Immature love says: 'I love you because I need you.' Mature love says 'I need you because I love you.'" - Erich Fromm

7] [Soft White Underbelly](#) – YouTube

Soft White Underbelly[SWU] interviews and portraits of the human condition by photographer, Mark Laita.

Contact: soft_white_underbelly@yahoo.com

For individuals requesting to be considered for an interview please send a short version of your story,

your location and a 15-30 second video of yourself to: soft_white_underbelly@yahoo.com

For ad-free, uncensored versions of SWU videos, as well as some exclusive videos please subscribe to: softwhiteunderbelly.com

Here's a link to audio only versions of my videos: <https://asmrdb.fanlink.to/softwhiteunderbelly>

Here's a link to a GoFundMe campaign to help some of the people seen in SWU interviews: <https://gofund.me/b68ef60f>

“The truth is, no one of us can be free until everybody is free.” - Maya Angelou

“Feeling guilty about stepping back or slowing down doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. You may need to make a conscious effort at not filling every spare moment of your time. Once you intentionally slow down and move into your healing phase. You may need to radically shift parts of your life. You need to make small intentional changes to support your healing journey. If you're trying to quickly mend your burn out so you can get back to being productive you will have multiple points in your life you're forced to stop and heal again & again & again. Healing takes time..... whether it's burn out or trauma and part of that may involve grieving and that's ok... ♥ take the time.” - Debbie Sturgill

8] [Art and Healing - The Beauty Path](#) – presented by Meghan Caughey and the [National Empowerment Center](#)

Thursday, October 20th, 2022 2:00 - 3:30 pm ET (eastern time)

Follow this link for Time Zone Converter: www.thetimezoneconverter.com

Art and Healing - The Beauty Path - German artist Gerhard Richter said, “ *Art is the highest form of hope.*” We know that hope and healing are closely related and this webinar will explore how art guides one artist, Meghan Caughey, in her recovery, plus how making art can be a tool for you in your own path and in supporting others.

We will view some of the drawings and paintings by Meghan Caughey MFA, and hear the story of the role making art plays in her recovery and life.

Next we invite webinar participants to make their own guided drawings based on the metaphor of the lotus. We'll also discuss a few group art activities that peer support specialists and others can use for supporting expression and creativity.

PLEASE BRING: the art activities described above require paper and something to draw with—such as oil pastels, colored pencils or markers, or anything else you prefer.

IF YOU DON'T CONSIDER YOURSELF A GREAT ARTIST—it is fine!!! No art experience or talent required! It will be light and fun!!!!

After the stories and drawing we will have time for questions and informal discussion.

Meghan Jisho McDonald Caughey, born in Atlanta, Georgia, is an artist, musician, author, and mental health activist.

She has a BA in psychology from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and a Master of Fine Arts in Pictorial Arts from San Jose State University. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia when she was a freshman in college.

She has taught in art schools and universities in California and Oregon. Her drawings and paintings are exhibited and published nationally.

A respected advocate in mental health reform, her essays have been published in medical journals, and she has pioneered the design of peer delivered services trainings that combine mental health with holistic health. As a cellist, she has performed with symphony orchestras and in conceptual art performances.

In 2021 her memoir was published titled: “Mud Flower: Surviving Schizophrenia and Suicide Through Art”. It has won four book awards.

She is the former senior director of peer-delivered services at a health non-profit organization in Portland, Oregon and she is also a clinical faculty member of the Psychiatry Department at Oregon Health and Science University. Her service dog, Ananda, is her muse.

8a] [Mud Flower](#) - Surviving Schizophrenia and Suicide Through Art

Mud Flower: Surviving Schizophrenia and Suicide Through Art shows the perspective of a person who has a serious mental illness, who survives extreme treatments, who both family and the health system have given up on, but who defies all expectations and common beliefs of what is possible.

Along the way, the author describes the role of art in her survival, grappling with how the life force can be either nurtured or destroyed by elements in our environment, such as nature, beauty, and art versus dehumanization and coercion.

“Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion.” – Buddha

“I realize what life is all about; it's hanging on when your heart's had enough; it's giving more when you feel like giving up.” - Unknown

9] [16 things I purchased that are helping me! What to do for a concussion at home?](#) By Silvie @ The Concussion Community

During my concussion recovery, I tried so many things, but I never shared about what you can do for a concussion at home. I get many questions like: “can you treat a concussion on your own?” I am sure there are many things that help you to cope or heal that you can do from your safe place at home.

I became my own doctor -At first, I thought you needed to go to a doctor, therapist or hospital to heal. But after searching for so long for the right treatment, I didn't get help from them. In my first two years, it felt like I had become my own doctor, so I started to experiment with things that would help

me heal or would make my situation a bit easier.

I tried many things, from super foods to daily yoga sessions and many more things. Some of these things really helped while others didn't, and I let go of them. But in this blog, I would love to share the things I ordered, which helped me physically or emotionally in my journey. Sometimes, even the smallest thing can make such a difference.

What to do for a concussion at home - 16 helpful things:

1. My eye pillow: this is a pillow to relax the muscles behind/around your eyes. I chose one with lavender in it to calm me down even more. Every time I overdid (mostly because of screens) something, I just laid down with this eye pillow, which helped me relax the muscles. I mostly use it before going to bed when I listen to an audiobook. It definitely improved my sleep. I could fall asleep more easily because my eyes weren't exposed to any light for 30 minutes - 1 hour before going to bed.
2. My heart rate monitor: to do interval training: As you may know, interval training was such a game-changer in my recovery. So, when people asked me what to do for a concussion at home, this (interval training) was definitely one of my first answers. To do the interval training, it is helpful to use a heart rate monitor to know if you are pushing hard enough and in the recovery time (after the interval) if you take enough rest to start another round of intervals. Feel free to check out my 7-day interval course to make sure you're doing the intervals in the correct way.
3. My blue light glasses: These glasses are so helpful when you have to use your laptop or mobile; it filters out all the blue light, especially in the evening. The blue keeps you up, telling your body that it's day, so you don't make the sleep hormone to get a good sleep. By filtering out the blue light in the evening, you will give your body the chance to calm down and not getting constantly a sign that it needs to stay awake. I fall asleep more easily. I use the glasses also during the day when I am working, and I notice my eyes are less tired, and it has a positive effect on my headaches. It doesn't cost that much, but it makes a big difference. I just love this transparent design.

[Read the entire article](#)

“When you realize that you are in charge of your life and your time is limited, your choices become more important. You'll care more about what you say yes to and what you say no to.” - Cheryl Richardson

“Trying moments are an opportunity to encounter our greatest self. We are stronger than we believe.” - Terry Mark

10] [The big idea: should we drop the distinction between mental and physical health?](#) - Health, mind and body books By Edward Bullmore @ The Guardian

The current false dichotomy holds back research and stigmatises patients

few months ago, I was infected by coronavirus and my first symptoms were bodily. But as the sore

throat and cough receded, I was left feeling gloomy, lethargic and brain-foggy for about a week. An infection of my body had morphed into a short-lived experience of depressive and cognitive symptoms – there was no clear-cut distinction between my physical and mental health.

My story won't be news to the millions of people worldwide who have experienced more severe or prolonged mental health outcomes of coronavirus infection. It adds nothing to the already weighty evidence for increased post-Covid rates of depression, anxiety or cognitive impairment. It isn't theoretically surprising, in light of the growing knowledge that inflammation of the body, triggered by autoimmune or infectious disease, can have effects on the brain that look and feel like symptoms of mental illness.

However, this seamless intersection of physical and mental health is almost perfectly misaligned with the mainstream way of dealing with sickness in body and mind as if they are completely independent of each other.

In practice, physical diseases are treated by physicians working for medical services, and mental illnesses are treated by psychiatrists or psychologists working for separately organised mental health services. These professional tribes follow divergent training and career paths: medics often specialise to focus exclusively on one bit of the body, while psychs treat mental illness without much consideration of the embodied brain that the mind depends on.

We live in a falsely divided world, which draws too hard a line – or makes a false distinction – between physical and mental health. The line is not now as severely institutionalised as when “lunatics” were exiled to remote asylums. But the distinction remains deeply entrenched despite being disadvantageous to patients on both sides of the divide.

A 55 year old woman with arthritis, depression and fatigue, and a 25 year old man with schizophrenia, obesity and diabetes, have at least this in common: they will probably both struggle to access joined-up healthcare for body and mind. Psychological symptoms in patients with physical disease are potentially disabling yet routinely under-treated. Physical health problems in patients with major psychiatric disorders contribute to their shockingly reduced life expectancy, about 15 years shorter than people without them.

Why do we stick with such a fractured and ineffective system? I will focus on two arguments for the status quo: one from each side, from the tribes of medics and psychs.

[Read the entire article](#)

10a] Professor Edward Bullmore heads the department of psychiatry at Cambridge University. He is the author of [The Inflamed Mind: A Radical New Approach to Depression](#)

As seen on "CBS This Morning"

Worldwide, depression will be the single biggest cause of disability in the next twenty years. But treatment for it has not changed much in the last three decades. In the world of psychiatry, time has apparently stood still...until now with Edward Bullmore's The Inflamed Mind: A Radical New Approach to Depression.

A Sunday Times (London) Top Ten Bestseller

In this game-changing book, University of Cambridge professor of psychiatry Edward Bullmore reveals the breakthrough new science on the link between depression and inflammation of the body and brain. He explains how and why we now know that mental disorders can have their root cause in the immune system, and outlines a future revolution in which treatments could be specifically targeted to break the vicious cycles of stress, inflammation, and depression.

The Inflamed Mind goes far beyond the clinic and the lab, representing a whole new way of looking at how mind, brain, and body all work together in a sometimes misguided effort to help us survive in a hostile world. It offers insights into how we could start getting to grips with depression and other mental disorders much more effectively in the future.

“Self-love is not just about constantly giving yourself praise and telling yourself how awesome you are.

It’s about loving the real you, the human you—the person who has feet of clay, who comes undone under criticism, who sometimes fails and disappoints others.

It’s about making a commitment to yourself that you will stick by yourself—even if no one else does!

That’s what I mean when I say you must love yourself as though your life depends on it, because quite simply, I know without a doubt that it does.” - Anita Moorjani

“The greater a child’s terror, and the earlier it is experienced, the harder it becomes to develop a strong and healthy sense of self.” - Nathaniel Branden

11] [The Simple Dutch Cure for Stress](#) By Alice Fleerackers @ [Pocket Worthy](#)

“Uitwaaien” is a popular activity around Amsterdam—one believed to have important psychological benefits.

In 2019 I was in San Francisco, a city known for its tech companies, steep hills, and fierce winds. Each day I’d run around the neighborhood and up through the park, ending with a spectacular view of the Golden Gate Bridge. Back in my AirBnB, I’d feel energized and refreshed, fingers tingling from the breeze. It was cold, exhausting, but completely exhilarating.

As it turns out, there’s a unique term, from the Dutch, for this sort of pastime. In the Netherlands, people have been seeking out windy exercise for more than a hundred years. Today, the practice is so common that it’s known as “uitwaaien.” It “literally translates to ‘outblowing,’” explains Caitlin Meyer, a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam’s Department of Dutch Linguistics. “It’s basically the activity of spending time in the wind, usually by going for a walk or a bike ride.” Meyer has lived in the Netherlands for more than 20 years and has come to specialize in the language, despite being a non-native speaker. She says uitwaaien is a popular activity where she lives—one believed to have important psychological benefits. “Uitwaaien is something you do to clear your mind and feel refreshed—out with the bad air, in with the good,” she tells me. “It’s seen as a pleasant, easy, and relaxing experience—a way to destress or escape from daily life.”

A growing body of evidence suggests that Dutch speakers may be onto something. “Pretty well every group of people benefits from being outdoors in the presence of nature,” says Jules Pretty, Professor of Environment and Society at the University of Essex. “It takes us out of the stresses and anxieties of the rest of life.” Over the last 15 years, he’s explored how a range of outdoor activities affect human psychology, including walking, cycling, and even farming. He’s found that people from all walks of life can increase their well-being after spending as little as five minutes amid natural settings, with positive impacts on sense of self-worth, mood, and sense of identity.

Other researchers have found similar results, linking activities like nature walks with [reduced](#) levels of depression, perceived stress, and negative emotions. Some research goes even further, reporting that walking in nature can help [reduce](#) headaches, improve immune function, and even, as in the case of the famous forest-bathing studies, [increase](#) anticancer protein production.

While research into the benefits of waterscapes isn’t as well-established, evidence [suggests](#) these “blue spaces” may be equally—or perhaps even more—beneficial to mental well-being. For example, people who live closer to the coast, like many Netherlanders do, [report](#) better physical and psychological health than those farther inland. Water may have a restorative [effect](#), helping people overcome negative emotions and [diminish](#) their mental distress. Apparently, when it comes to relaxation and recovery, a little “outblowing” at the beach might be just what the doctor ordered.

There are lots of theories about why spending time in nature might be so good for us. Some researchers, like Qing Li, a physician at Nippon Medical School Hospital and the President of the Japanese Society of Forest Medicine, believe the answer may literally be blowing in the wind. He and his team have spent years studying the effects of phytoncides, antibacterial and antimicrobial substances that trees and other plants release into the air to help them fight diseases and harmful organisms. When humans breathe in these substances—typically by spending time in nature—their health can improve. Across several studies, phytoncides have been [shown](#) to boost immune function, increase anticancer protein production, reduce stress hormones, improve mood, and help people relax.

[Read the entire article](#)

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” - Desmond Tutu

“The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower; share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises.” - Leo Buscaglia

12] [Richmond’s trauma healing coordinator connects those impacted by gun violence to resources](#) By Nicole Dantzler @ WRIC ABC 8 News

The Richmond City Health District is taking a different approach in responding to violence. It employs a trauma healing coordinator to connect families who have been impacted by violence to resources that they need.

Donte McCutchen was tapped for the health district’s position back in April. “We needed a response. We need this,” he said.

McCutchen is the pastor of [Love Cathedral Community Church](#) in Richmond, and he has a background in public health.

“The workers are stressed. The people are stressed,” he told 8News.

This week, McCutchen wrote in a Facebook post saying he prayed with the family of a [15-year-old girl who was shot and killed](#) in the city on Monday. The shooting happened on North 1st Street in Gilpin Court. Family members told 8News that the teen was walking to the store and got caught in the crossfire.

McCutchen wrote in the same Facebook post that he preached at the funeral of a 17-year-old who was shot and killed right in front of his home church. “I want us all whole. I want us all healed so we can be strong,” he said.

McCutchen has lost family members to gun violence himself. In April 2021, his cousins [Sharnez and Neziah Hill died in a shooting at the Belt Atlantic Apartments](#).

“We want to bring the resources to them and that’s to those impacted on both sides. Those who are doing the shooting and killing, and the families who are impacted by the shooting and killing, and even those persons that respond and work,” he said.

As of this past Sunday, Sept. 11, 41 people have been killed in Richmond this year. That’s down from 54 homicides at the same point last year, according to [data from the Richmond Police Department](#).

McCutchen said he works closely with grassroots organizations and connects people who are on the ground doing the work. So far, he’s seen a difference in the way the city responds to gun violence.

“The beauty of community work is we get to do this together,” he said. “We’re building new communities and networks that are so amazing. Now, those that do the work feel supported.”

McCutchen added that one of his goals is to have community hubs all over the district so that people don’t have to look outside of the area for help.

[Read the entire article](#)

“Only the weak are cruel. Gentleness can only be expected from the strong.” - Leo Buscaglia

“The authentic self is the soul made visible.” - Sarah Ban Breathnach

Thank you & Take care, Michael

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin

Luther King, Jr.

A diagnosis is not a destiny

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

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"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi