



*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 May 2025**

Hi folks,

Welcome to the May issue of the Surviving Spirit newsletter. May is [Mental Health Awareness Month](#).

“Mental Health Awareness Month was established in 1949 to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness in Americans’ lives and to celebrate recovery from mental illness. For more than 20 years, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has recognized **Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM)** every May to increase awareness about the vital role mental health plays in our overall health and well-being and provide resources and information to support individuals and communities who may need mental health support.”

A shout out for a new song co-written with my daughter Michelle Skinner and performed live by the two of us. Please take a listen and subscribe to my You Tube channel – thank you.

[I Hear You Calling](#)(c) – lyrics are posted under the video.

Also grateful to have participated in this podcast -

Live Panel: [Over-medication of Childhood sexual abuse](#) [CSA] by Clinicians - YouTube -

Today's topic is the overuse and misuse of prescription medications on CSA survivors and victims. Today’s panel includes 2 former podcast guests: Michael Skinner & Robert Maniscalco join host Mike Chapman. If you want to see the VIDEO version of this podcast, you can watch from either Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/show/3wzBKXA...> or Youtube [ [@polarlifeconsulting](#) ]

[Full show notes available here](#)

[Robert Maniscalco](#) – artist/advocate - Robert Maniscalco is a nationally renowned, Charleston-based multidisciplinary creative. He’s a commission portrait painter, fine gallery artist,,courtroom and quick sketch artist and teacher. Robert’s also a best selling [author](#) who is a recognized arts authority,

[Michael Skinner](#) – musician/advocate

Mike Chapman – podcast host/advocate - Healing for Male Survivors

*“We must learn to lean on others, and sometimes accept others leaning on us...We can't do it alone.” - Alateen – Hope for Children of Alcoholics*

*“Change, like healing, takes time.” - Veronica Roth*

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*“Music melts all the separate parts of our bodies together.” - Anais Nin*

*“Unconditional love really exists in each of us. It is part of our deep inner being. It is not so much an active emotion as a state of being. It's not 'I love you' for this or that reason, not 'I love you if you love me.' It's love for no reason, love without an object.” - Ram Dass*

## **Finding a Path** by Jeffrey V Perry

I'm not looking for the way, but a way!  
There's no gold at the end of a rainbow.  
You don't need to believe in God to pray.  
A reason to stay, but then you must go!  
The fight is not for pieces we gather.  
The struggles are with the gigantic stones.  
We all should have a part that will matter.  
But, we refocus our rights as unknowns.  
It is easier to live together,  
Than for us to forever live apart!  
Yet, we have fought brother against brother,  
And still nothing seems to have changed our heart.  
Seriously, if love is the answer then,  
We must learn what are the questions to ask?  
You can not keep a lie until the end, Because, the truth is the completed task.  
Where is that path which is straight and narrow?  
Next to where a greedy heart is once filled.  
Beside the lone flight of a red sparrow.  
There is that one place where your heart is real!  
If I had no friends, no one would judge me!  
But, I have many that say I did right.  
I have no wealth, nor halos above me.  
And I feel alone when day turns to night.  
I've taken the time to decide myself;  
I'm the one who can't kick me in the butt.  
I'll run to hide from everyone else,  
If my back proves not strong to lift them up.  
The road there less traveled that Frost laments, Is prophetic and grows to become fact!  
Just finding a path for yourself makes sense.  
Just let go, as the journey brings us back.

## **Paved Roads: The paths of the en-slavers** by Jeffrey V. Perry

*PAVED ROADS* is a book of poetry, mainly focused on social issues of today as a spiritual, historical, philosophical critique using common-sense rhythms and schemes that are both, down-to-earth and provocative. It is written in today's language with the threat of challenging normal speech, which is easy to understand while complex and layered for multiple tastes and preferences. This book introduces new concepts on old perceptions.

*“It's wild how trauma makes you push people away when all you want to do is feel loved. It's wild how trauma makes you do everything on your own when all you really want is someone to be there with you without holding it over your head. It's wild how trauma makes you keep everything all bottled up when in reality all you really want to do is just scream it out to whoever will listen.” - Living With Trauma & Dissociation*

1] [My Mission - My Goal - Offering Kindness and Understanding](#) - Helping People! By Lisa Zarccone

Article excerpt: Every day when I wake up I think to myself how I am going to make a difference.

It may be in someone's life, a cause, or just a random act of kindness. This is what swirls around in my head all the time. For me it is a natural occurrence. How can I help??

When I was growing up my struggles were quite difficult and YES real! If you have taken the time to read my personal memoir you will understand that statement. If you have read my posts, blogs and inspirational quotes you will immediately know that I have been on an incredible journey of ups, downs, sideways and everything in between, but I am still standing here today saying... "How Can I Help"!

I wrote my story to raise awareness to these strong subjects that need to be discussed over and over again until change happens. Some have said I wrote my story to exploit my mother and her illness, others have said I am a liar! These comments are so far from the truth that at this point, I do not address them any longer because I know what I am doing on a daily basis is what counts! My goal from the beginning has always been to help. My mission for sharing my story is to raise awareness, offer hope and healing. To promote Change in a world that needs a lot of changing.

I am one woman with one story!

What I can tell you is this, as I share my story it is seeping out all over the world. People are contacting me privately thanking me for **STANDING UP AND USING MY VOICE!** I broke the silence! I have had many people come up to me after an author talk and share their personal stories with me, some for the very **FIRST TIME**. How empowering is that? Me one person can do so much just by sharing. I am not saying this to toot my own horn, I am saying this because we all have the power within us to be courageous human beings!

The thought process, "If she can be strong enough to share her story, then I can share mine". It is that switch in the mindset, believing in one-self for the first time, as you are looking through life with a fresh set of eyes. The more you speak, and literally hear yourself say the words out loud the true healing has begun without you even realizing it!

[The Unspoken Truth: A Memoir](#) by Lisa Zarccone @ Barnes & Noble®

Once upon a time, when I was a little girl, I was tucked warm and safe in my bed with a loving family to protect me. In the blink of an eye it all changed before my pretty baby blues. The grim reality of a mentally ill mother and a dying brother had become my nightmare. The reality that ripped my family apart and sent my distraught father running, leaving me to deal with my mother's mania.

Left alone with my psychotic mother, I was forced to deal with the horrors that lay before me. I was a scared and confused little girl that had to learn how to survive many tragedies and overcome countless acts of abuse. This is a gripping tale of my childhood. I had to pull deep from within my soul to muster up the strength and courage to survive, with only blind faith and loss of innocence to lead the way. I was only six when my world came crashing down around me.

Read my harrowing story, from a child's point of view; it promises to keep you emotionally invested from start to finish.

*“We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life. But we can take it, what we do with it - and that is what really counts in the end.” - Joseph Fort Newton*

*“We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” William Shakespeare*

2] [Kaytee Gillis, LCSW](#) - psychotherapist, writer, and autistic cat mom

I am a therapist who works with those who have survived traumatic families. I am also a survivor, so I get it. Many of us lived through trauma, chaos, dysfunction, and abuse, and are struggling with how to live a happy and fulfilling life with all of the lingering feelings and symptoms that stay with us as a result of these experiences.

Many of us notice the impacts of our history in our relationships, friendships, even in our professional life. My books and articles all center on educating survivors and clinicians about how symptoms of these experiences show up, and how to learn to work through- or live with- them.

Many of us grow up and enter relationships that mimic the dysfunction we experienced with our caregivers. It takes time to learn to understand and break these patterns. But helping others to recognize them is a passion of mine!

I am also a full time PhD student researching intimate partner violence at Michigan State University. And while academic journals can be cool and all, I like the idea of having information that is accessible and available to those who need it, when they need it.

I'm a writer for Psychology Today where I post regularly about trauma and healing- my column name is "[Invisible Bruises](#)," or you can click on the [Psychology Today](#) tab on here. All my articles there are free!

#### **A little about me:**

I'm a millennial: But I don't like avocado toast!

Nerdy and neurodivergent: Autistic and some ADHD

INFJ: The outgoing introvert

Queer

Author of [Healing from Parental Abandonment and Neglect](#) - Move Beyond Insecure Attachment to Build Safety, Connection, and Trust with Yourself and Others

Do you blame yourself for being abandoned or neglected as a child, or suffer from poor self-esteem, anxiety, or depression as a result? Do you have deep feelings of shame, defectiveness, and insecurity

that impact your life and relationships? If so, you are not alone. These are common experiences for survivors of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). But what happened to you as a child or young adult isn't your fault. By understanding how you were affected, you can start on the path to healing and personal growth.

*“There are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of and their coffers are never empty.” - Kahlil Gibran*

*“When things aren't adding up in your life, begin subtracting. Strive for more time uncluttered by the needless things people fill their lives with, leaving you with space for what matters. A life that isn't constant busyness, rushing, and stress, but instead contemplation, creation, and connection with people and projects you love.” - marcandangel*

3] [Unseen Scars: How Childhood Trauma Affects Adult Mental Health](#) with Dr. Gregory Jantz @ You Tube

Childhood trauma can leave invisible wounds that resurface throughout adult life, impacting relationships, self-worth, and emotional well-being. In this video, Dr. Gregory Jantz explains the long-term psychological effects of early trauma and how these experiences can shape mental health well into adulthood.

From anxiety and depression to trust issues and emotional dysregulation, unresolved childhood trauma can influence how individuals view themselves and the world. Dr. Jantz shares key signs to watch for and offers steps toward healing and recovery using a whole-person approach.

If you've experienced emotional neglect, abuse, or instability growing up, this video will help you better understand your past—and what you can do about it today.

What You'll Learn in This Video: Common long-term effects of childhood trauma

How early emotional wounds impact adult relationships

The link between trauma and anxiety, depression, or PTSD

Why trauma may go unnoticed or misdiagnosed

Tools and therapies that support trauma healing and recovery

Read the full article: [Overcoming Childhood Traumatic Grief](#)

[The Center • A Place of HOPE](#) - Mental Health Treatment Washington

*“Words matter because they are so powerful. Words have the power to build up and the power to tear down. They have the ability to create and the power to destroy.” - Dr. Deborah Roof*

*“It seems outlandish to me that we need to forgive the children in us who were so innocent and understanding of blame. What a cruel irony that we need to forgive the blameless, yet we must let our*

*inner children know that we forgive them because, like our parents, we have been blaming them since time immemorial.” - Pete Walker*

#### 4] [The Conversation I Never Thought I'd Have With My Dad.](#) @ YouTube

My dad and I spent two decades separated by lies. I believed things about my dad that weren't true.

Now, we're sitting down to talk — really talk — for the first time. This is how we're rebuilding what was stolen from us.

At age nine, during my parents' divorce, my mom made me believe my dad was abusive, bad, and didn't love me.

For the next 20 years, I rejected my (actually loving) dad. In 2022, I figured out the truth. In June 2023, I began The Anti-Alienation Project to raise awareness about parental alienation from a child's point-of-view. I hope to become a resource for others like me, helping them navigate and find support to heal

Welcome to The Anti-Alienation Project, where I discuss all things parental alienation... from the POV of an adult child who's been through it. I'm sorry you're going through this, but I'm that glad you're here:)

The Anti-Alienation Project - Parental Alienation: psychological child abuse where one parent manipulates their child to reject their other loving parent, without true justification.

#### **Our Mission:**

Alert alienated children

Support alienated children when they learn the truth

Educate the public on the long-lasting damage of parental alienation.

“...children are one-half of each of you. Remember that, because every time you tell your child what an “idiot” his father is, or what a “fool” his mother is.... you are telling the child half of him is bad.” - Judge Michael Haas

*“Today, when faced with choices, I will opt for the path that enhances my self-esteem. I am learning to live a full life, one in which I like and care for the person I am.” - Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*

*“Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks. Listen to your heart, it knows. - Native American Proverb*

#### 5] [A Top Neurosurgeon Reveals His Simple Tips for Protecting Your Brain as You Age](#) by Dr. Sanjay Gupta @ Pocket

**Article excerpt:**“We're seeing evidence that lifestyle changes can significantly improve brain health and even reverse brain disease,” he says. “That may not sound that significant, except that we really never thought of the brain that way until recently. We thought of the heart that way, and some other

organs, but the brain was always this black box.”

The 50-year-old is best known for his CNN gig, but he’s also a practicing neurosurgeon at the Emory University School of Medicine, removing tumors and clipping aneurysms inside that black box, often while listening to the Gipsy Kings. In his spare time, he does triathlons (of course) and meditates (duh!), and at the time of this writing he’s working on his fourth book, [Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age](#). It’s an evidence-based exploration of the latest science on brain health and what tactics are working for Dr. Gupta himself.

Here he shares his favorite tips and strategies—basically, what to do with your body, your meals, and your mental energy—for keeping your brain sharp. Here’s how to make it happen:

**Think of inactivity as a disease.** - “Every time I’m about to sit, I ask myself: [Do I need to sit right now?](#)” Dr. Gupta says. “That may go further in terms of the benefit of movement on your brain than even going to the gym. I don’t have a chair in my office.” If you can stand or walk during meetings, phone calls, and other activities, do it. Think of inactivity as the disease rather than working out as the cure, he says.

**Always be prepared to train.**- Exercise boosts blood flow to your brain, tamps down inflammation, and promotes the growth of new brain cells. You need at least 150 minutes a week. “Wherever I am, I have [running shoes](#), a swimsuit, and resistance bands,” says Dr. Gupta. He keeps weights in his bedroom and has a pullup bar in his office.

**Walk, talk, gripe.**-Take a brisk walk with a friend and talk about your problems. It’s a brain trifecta: moving, socializing, and releasing stress. “Doing those three things ends up measurably detoxifying your brain,” Dr. Gupta says. “I used to train very solitary, but walking more with friends has really changed my brain health. I can feel it.”

*“Healing is rarely neat, easy, or Instagrammable. It’s chaotic and deeply personal-and that’s what makes it real. If you’re on your healing journey, be gentle with yourself. Progress isn’t always visible, but it’s happening. You’ve got this.” — @womenempowermentcorner Instagram*

*“You don’t have to suffer continual chaos in order to grow.” - John C. Lilly*

6] [Psychotropic Deprescribing Council](#) – Safer practices. Better outcomes

Incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2023, the Psychotropic Deprescribing Council arose from the experiences of patients, their friends and families, and medical professionals who realized that more detailed knowledge about deprescribing psychotropics is a need that is becoming more pressing day by day.

Our organization is founded on a vision of a future where clinicians and patients work together to optimize psychotropic treatment safety for safer practices and better outcomes.

Our mission is to advance safe and responsible psychotropic deprescribing through research and education in best clinical practices.

We intend to unite those medical professionals, professional organizations, patient advocates, and other parties concerned about psychotropic deprescribing. Major activities will be research, meetings, seminars, and publications to inform medical professionals and the general public.

## Our people

*“Part of learning humility is learning to contribute to my own well-being. Today I will do something loving for myself that I'd normally do for someone else.” - Al-Anon*

*“One must not always think so much about what one should do, but rather what one should be. Our works do not ennoble but we must ennoble our works.” - Eckhart von Hochheim*

7] [Megzz's Life With Asperger's](#): Writers Block.

*Hello there! This is just letting you into my daily life with Asperger's Syndrome. It shows you what it is living with it 24 hours a day and 7 days a week! So feel free to have a look!*

Imagine if you will a large bottle with a cork in stuffed so hard in it where nothing can get in or out. Inside the bottle is full of words, my heart, letters, numbers, notes, blogposts, books, ideas, memories, feelings amongst other things as well. I've been holding onto it for three years where I've had not idea what to do with it. Each time I feel like I want to share from deep inside my chest, the words and everything gets stuck in my throat unable to go anywhere. It's like a huge invisible hand is holding my throat and another hand covering my mouth up feeling things are trapped inside me. My voice almost lost to myself and everyone around me. Where silence is the new, very uncomfortable norm.

This has been me over the last three years with my writer's block. About a month ago I wrote a perfect quote to describe what writer's block is like for me yet now I can't find it anywhere. I'll more than likely find it after I've written this and least expect it. That's how it happens sometimes in life. The unexplainable, mysterious, fascinating and most serendipitous moments when you least expect them... A real synchronicity. There's things that happen in life that happen for a reason. Sometimes the reason isn't apparent at the time yet you will find out later what it is. Yet for me I've had a few ideas why I've had the writers block.

Some of the reasons have been that some really big events happened in my life 3 years ago where I lost my voice in a lot of ways. I was taken aback and humbled. A lot of people saw me very raw. I didn't know what to say or how to say things and I needed a huge break from everything. This included all my social media, Facebook profile, my groups, page as well as my blog here with my writing for you all who read this. I could hardly bring myself to looking at any of it. I felt in a sense that I couldn't be any type of spokesperson or role model for anyone in a strange way. It's hard to describe that. I've been needing a whole lot of time to process, think, heal and also grow more as a person. Yet I found myself blocked unable to say anything or come back to things as a writer.

I found it comfortable and more safer to be listening to music or behind my mobile phones camera lenses. To observe life from that way with two different cameras and capabilities on each phone. I felt to express myself that way was better for me at the time to capture many different memories and many different things. To capture life like that had more meaning for me where I could see and take things in. As the saying goes "A picture is worth a thousand words." I, in a sense craved some type of privacy and

also realized that how as people we are all intertwined with one another. Of also how different actions can affect many different people and communities with their own little ripple effects. Like no man is an island and we all need people in our lives. It is true that more people care about each other than you realize. We all affect other people around us.

*“We blame little things in others and pass over great things in ourselves; we are quick enough in perceiving and weighing what we suffer from others, but we mind not what others suffer from us.” - Thomas A'Kempis*

*“One way to learn to love myself is to accept the love of others. Even if I don't feel deserving, I can be grateful for another's kindness. And if I appreciate something about someone else, I can tell them so. A small gesture can go a long way toward healing a hurting soul.” - Al-Anon*

8] [Re-Regulated by Anna Runkle](#) @ Penguin – Random House Books

Introducing a radical healing approach for the adult symptoms of Childhood PTSD—from the creator of the Crappy Childhood Fairy program and YouTube channel.

Conventional trauma treatments (talk therapy and medication) simply don't work for many trauma survivors, and now we know why. Researchers have identified the core symptom that drives most other symptoms—neurological dysregulation. It's an injury to your nervous system triggered by abuse and neglect in childhood, and it can profoundly impact your physical health, damage your ability to learn and focus, and hold you back from forming caring relationships.

The good news is that healing is possible, and in *Re-Regulated*, author Anna Runkle (aka the Crappy Childhood Fairy) shows you how. Chapter by chapter, she teaches you practical steps to identify signs of dysregulation, quickly re-regulate, and then stay regulated more of the time. Drawing from her own experience healing Childhood PTSD symptoms, and her decades of work coaching and mentoring thousands of others working to heal from abuse and neglect in the past, Anna helps you calm triggers, break out of isolation, and change the self-defeating behaviors that are so common for traumatized people. From a regulated state, things can move forward rapidly in every area of your life so you can become your full and real self at last.

*“Re-Regulated is jam-packed with practical advice and tools to begin to heal from dysregulation, disconnection, and self-defeating behaviors. Bravely sharing her personal journey from the depths of despair, Anna gifts us with her inspirational process of self-discovery to overcome her own childhood trauma.” - Dr. Nicole LePera, author of the #1 New York Times bestsellers *How to Do the Work and How to Be the Love You Seek**

[Crappy Childhood Fairy](#) @ You Tube - My name is Anna Runkle: I teach people to recognize and heal the symptoms of Childhood PTSD

*“Being heard is so close to being loved, that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable.” - David Augsburger*

*“What a lovely surprise to discover how un-lonely being alone can be.” - Ellen Burstyn*

9] [Blue states change course on mental health policies](#) by Caitlin Owens @Axios

**Article excerpt** - Cities and states that once championed progressive approaches to mental health and drug use are continuing their [yearslong course reversal](#), and are increasingly open to involuntary commitment.

**Why it matters:** The push to get people with severe mental illness help — especially those who are homeless — is a response to public backlash, but may be outpacing the availability of high-quality treatment for them.

**The big picture:** Writing the "blue states abandon progressive drug/mental health policies" story has begun to feel repetitive to me — this has been ongoing for years. But it continues to take different iterations, and it's worth continuing to write about until someone figures out how to solve the problem.

- And defining the problem can depend on who you ask. For many voters, they're looking for public places they feel are safer. But for patients with mental illness, treatment and support can be incredibly hard to access.
- It's even more complicated when the mental illness is combined with substance abuse — a situation that lands many in hospital emergency rooms, cut off from needed supports and services.

**Reality check:** Out-of-sight, out-of-mind isn't a solution, at least not from a health care perspective (this isn't a public safety newsletter).

And the current trends of government-mandated treatment or simply the criminalization of homelessness and mental illness are occurring at a time when the federal government is considering vastly decreasing funding streams vital to mental health treatment, especially Medicaid.

**State of play:** Some cities are responding to 2024 election results, in which voters elected candidates to office based on who spoke to their desire for addressing "this nexus of addiction, mental illness and homelessness," said Keith Humphreys, a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University.

- Humphreys authored a recent [Brookings Institution report](#) that found policy frameworks in the Pacific Northwest region that had decreased law enforcement's role in drug policy have since seen public and policymaker support plummet, and have been rolled "back as fast as [they] had been implemented."
- San Francisco voters elected Mayor Daniel Lurie, who [told the New York Times](#) that his success depends on "if we grow our economy, if we get people off the streets and into mental health beds, if people feel safe walking down our streets again." Lurie last month [unveiled his vision](#) for addressing the city's homelessness and behavioral health crisis.
- And some changes are stemming from [last year's Supreme Court decision](#) allowing state and local governments to prohibit sleeping outdoors.
- In Silicon Valley, San Jose's Democratic mayor recently called for arresting homeless people after they resist shelter three times, [the NYT recently reported](#). The goal is to move them into mental health treatment, but they could end up serving jail time.

**Between the lines:** One clear trend is the growing support for the involuntary commitment of mentally ill patients.

*"I care about truth not for truth's sake but for my own." - Samuel Butler*

*"Keep it simple" and "One day at a time" - Al-Anon*

10] [Uber & Lyft Sexual Assault: Get Help](#) @ Helping Survivors

Understand your legal rights and options to file a rideshare sexual assault lawsuit and how to hire the right Lyft or Uber sexual assault lawyer to help you seek justice and move forward.

- If you've experienced sexual abuse or assault in an Uber or Lyft, an experienced Uber/Lyft sexual assault lawyer can help you understand your rights and file a claim
- Uber and Lyft can be held accountable for rideshare sexual assault through filing a lawsuit against the companies for their role in the harm that happened to you
- Helping Survivors works with multiple law firms and can put you in touch with an experienced Lyft & Uber sexual assault lawyer in your area with the expertise you deserve

*“There's really no such thing as the voiceless. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.” - Arundhati Roy*

*“We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.” - Maya Angelou*

11] [The Insight Cafe: An SBI Podcast](#) - PACEs in the Faith-Based Community @ PACEsConnection

- PACES – positive adverse childhood experiences

In today's fast-paced world, where challenges are as complex as they are widespread, understanding the root causes of many societal issues is more important than ever. One of the areas that the ETSU Ballard Health Strong BRAIN Institute focuses on and that demands our attention is the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on lifelong health, well-being, and societal outcomes. In our quest to build a healthier, more resilient society, we must explore the profound effects of childhood trauma and how resilience can shape the trajectory of lives.

Each episode of The Insight Cafe brings together thought leaders from a wide range of disciplines, creating a rich tapestry of perspectives. Psychologists delve into the cognitive and emotional impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), offering insights into how these early traumas shape behavior and mental health across the lifespan. Medical professionals explain the physiological consequences of chronic stress and trauma, revealing how ACEs can lead to a heightened risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and even cancer. Social workers and educators contribute by discussing the importance of early interventions, supportive environments, and policies that promote well-being and resilience. By featuring such a diverse array of experts, the podcast not only informs but also contextualizes the multifaceted nature of these issues. Listeners gain a holistic understanding that transcends mere statistics, grounding the data in real-life implications and strategies for change.

Please join us at the Insight Café:

[The Insight Café: An SBI Podcast | Podcast on Spotify](#)

[The Insight Café: An SBI Podcast - Apple Podcasts](#)

[The Insight Café: An SBI Podcast on Amazon Music](#)

*“Humility will help us see ourselves in true perspective and keep our minds open to the truth.” - Alcoholism, The Family Disease*

*“I now choose to rise above my personality problems to recognize the magnificence of my being. I am totally willing to learn to love myself.” - Louise L. Hay*

12] [The Risks of Licensing Peer Support Specialists](#) by Dana Foglesong @ LinkedIn

**Article excerpt** - There are moments in a profession’s evolution that demand a closer look, not just at where we are, but at where we’re headed. For peer support, one of those moments is now. A major shift is on the table: transitioning from certification to licensure for peer support specialists.

This is a complex and sometimes emotionally charged issue. While there are valid arguments on both sides, what follows is one perspective, my own.

### **Why is there a push toward licensure?**

First, and this is important to acknowledge: the push for licensure is coming from a place of good intent. There’s growing enthusiasm for peer support at both national and state levels. For some leaders, licensure is seen as a way to bring legitimacy and credibility to the profession. It is also viewed as a mechanism for expanding access through private insurance reimbursement.

Second, policy trends tend to cascade. States pride themselves on autonomy, but when one implements a new practice, others often follow suit. That’s exactly what we’re seeing here. One state pursued licensure, others followed, and now it’s surfacing more frequently in legislative agendas across the country.

### **A Look at the Trend:**

The first state to implement peer support licensure set a precedent. In this model, the minimum requirements for peer specialist candidates include the following:

1. A diagnosis by a mental health professional of a behavioral health disorder.
2. A history of receiving treatment for the diagnosed condition.
3. Active recovery status, with no periods of incarceration, hospitalization, or inpatient admission related to behavioral health lasting longer than 72 hours within the two years preceding application or after licensure, and no chemical dependency symptoms except a strong desire or urge to drink alcohol.
4. Completion of a board-approved 40-hour training course with examination, of which clinical supervision is one of the approved subjects.
5. Submission of fingerprints for a criminal background check.
6. Clinical supervision by someone who has held licensure as an LCSW, LCPC, LMFT, LAC, APRN, physician, or psychologist for at least three years.

(For those that aren't familiar, these requirements are much more clinical and more intrusive with personal medical information than the information requested for peer specialist certification.)

*“Ten years ago, I still feared loss enough to abandon myself in order to keep things stable. I'd smile when I was sad, pretend to like people who appalled me. What I now know is that losses aren't cataclysmic if they teach the heart and soul their natural cycle of breaking and healing.”*

- Martha Beck

*“Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.” - Hippocrates*

13] [Hey Sam - Mental Health Textline](#) - for people up to 24 years old. @ Samaritans

If you or someone you know is feeling lonely, depressed, overwhelmed, or having thoughts of suicide, we are here for you.

Hey Sam is a dedicated peer-to-peer texting service for people up to 24 years old.

- Designed for and staffed by young people
- Free and confidential
- Nonjudgmental

Whatever the reason, reach out. You are not alone.

**[Text: 439-726](#) | [Hours: 9AM-12AM \(Midnight\) ET - How it Works](#)**

1. Text Hey Sam at [439-726](#) when you want to talk.
2. You will get an automated response right away while we connect you with one of our trained team members.
3. We will ask for your name and why you are reaching out, but only share what you are comfortable sharing.
4. Our team member will listen to you. We will not give advice or try to “fix” anything. We simply want to support you in whatever you are experiencing.

**Become a Hey Sam Volunteer** - You can be the caring listener when someone texts Hey Sam.

Volunteers:

- Must be 15 to 24 years old
- Complete a thorough online training program
- Able to work a consistent 4-hour shift every week
- Can work from anywhere in the world

Fill out the [volunteer inquiry form](#).

*“I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust... We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.” - Thurgood Marshall*

*“Meditation can help us embrace our worries, our fear, our anger; and that is very healing. We let our own natural capacity of healing do the work.” - Thich Nhat Hanh*

14] [‘When power can define madness’](#): China accused of using mental health law to lock up critics by Amy Hawkins @ The Guardian

**Article excerpt** - More than a decade after China passed a groundbreaking mental health law, victims

and activists say that involuntary hospitalisation remains common.

Zhang Po was barely one year out of school when an out of control mine-cart barrelled into him deep in a pit in Anhui province, causing injuries that ended his brief career as a coalminer. Since the accident in 1999, he has been living off disability allowances provided by his former employer in Huainan, Anhui's coal city. But in 2024 Zhang was sent to hospital once again – this time to a psychiatric ward.

Zhang was sectioned for 22 days in June after he protested outside the office of his former employer, demanding an increase in his disability allowance. “I endured more than 20 days of humiliation in there. There was no phone, and my belt and shoelaces were taken away,” Zhang said in a recent interview with Chinese media. Zhang said that he was forced to take medicines and tied to his bed for several hours a day. After the three weeks in hospital, he was sentenced to eight days of administrative detention for “[picking quarrels and provoking trouble](#)”.

After [local media](#) picked up Zhang's case, his story went viral. Related hashtags were viewed nearly 40m times on Weibo after it was first reported in April. “If even the law cannot stop a mental illness diagnosis, how can ordinary people prove themselves to be normal?,” wrote one commentator. “When power can arbitrarily define madness and non-madness, everyone will live in fear of disappearing!”

Zhang's case is not isolated. More than a decade after China passed a groundbreaking mental health law that was supposed to eliminate such abuses, victims and activists say that the practice of involuntary hospitalisation remains common, with a weakened civil society limiting the ability of people to defend their rights.

Zhang Youmiao, no relation of Zhang Po, is “still trying to process” their experience of being sectioned in 2018 and 2019. “I still feel upside down,” says Zhang.

In 2018, Zhang was living in Xi'an, the capital of central China's Shaanxi province. For years, Zhang's family and their neighbours had been waiting for compensation for the demolition of hundreds of houses in their urban village that had been slated for reconstruction.

In August 2018, Zhang joined a small protest outside the provincial government. They were swiftly arrested and Zhang was later taken to a psychiatric hospital. Their hands and feet were tied to the bed and they were forced to take medicine twice a day. “I tried not to swallow those pills by hiding the medicine between my teeth and my cheek and spitting it out afterwards,” Zhang recalls. Zhang says that their parents were persuaded to consent to the treatment after the police said that Zhang's gender identity – Zhang identifies as non-binary – could represent a mental illness.

**A system ripe for abuse** - China's mental health law, passed in 2012, allows authorities to detain “troublemakers” without the consent of the person or their relatives. A person may be involuntarily hospitalised if they pose a risk of harm to themselves or others. Other countries, including the UK, have similar legal provisions. But in China, many fear that the system is ripe for abuse as there are few checks and balances. A recent [BBC investigation](#) found that criticising the Chinese Communist party could be grounds for a psychiatric diagnosis.

*“In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute.”  
- Thurgood Marshall*

*“You get to the point where your demons, which are terrifying, get smaller and smaller and you get bigger and bigger.” - August Wilson*

***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](mailto: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***

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