



Let's Talk About
Psychiatry

Hooking Your World on Drugs

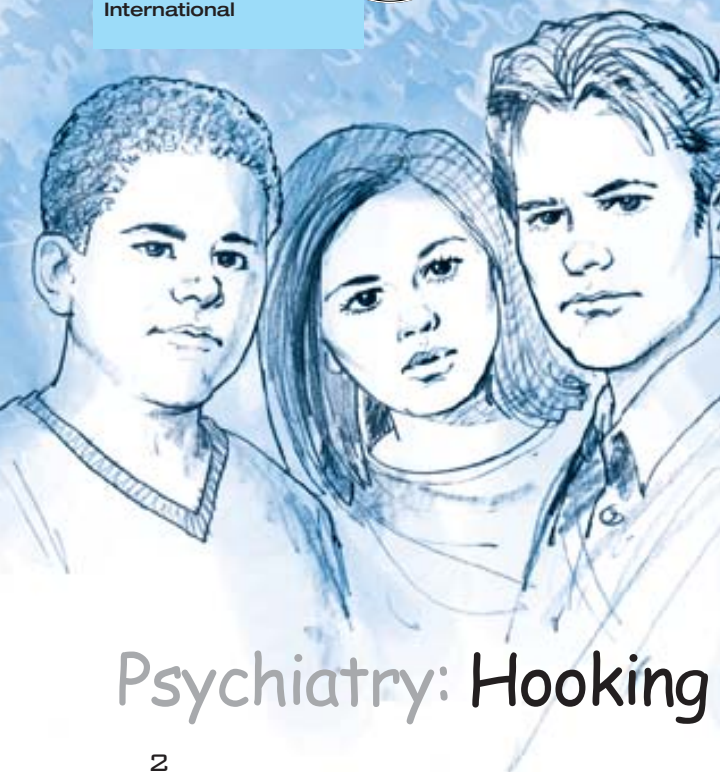


A public service
message from
Citizens Commission
on Human Rights
International

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Psychiatry: Hooking

What Do You Think?

What's totally bad about today's world? Many of you might say the attacks on New York and Washington or terrorism generally.

But did you know that a recent survey of young people showed that they thought drugs, gangs, violence and crime are totally bad?

Forty years ago, they would probably have said, "square parents," the Vietnam War and short hair.

When asked about drugs, like the ones kids are given to "help them learn," many believed they are "stupid" and "over-prescribed."

If the same question had been asked 40 or 50 years ago, the answer would have been "Are you kidding, a drug to help you learn?"

Drugs for the Classroom

You have probably heard a lot about drugs being good for concentrating and learning at school. What do you think about them? Do you have any friends who are taking these drugs? What do they think about having to take them?

Well, we want to make sure you know what they are all about, just in case you ever have to make a decision about it, or talk about it with your parents. So we decided to write this information letter for you.

The first thing we want to make sure of is that you know enough about the words that are used to talk about the drugs, and the problems they are supposed to fix. The following is a short list of the words that you will see.

Your World on Drugs

Word List

Psychiatry: This word comes from two other words. *Psyche* (meaning “mind/soul”) and *iatreia* (meaning “cure”). Psychiatry is a branch of medicine and psychiatrists treat people, using drugs and other physical methods, to change the way people act and feel.

Psychology: This word comes from two other words also. *Psyche* (meaning “mind/soul”) and *logia* (meaning “study of”). Psychology tries to explain why people act, think and feel the way they do.

Attention: Ability to take notice.

Deficit: A lack of.

Hyper: More than normal.

Active: Being lively, using a lot of energy.

Disorder: A mental or physical condition that is not considered normal.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A list of behaviors that psychiatrists say are problems, such as, has too little attention, is too active, fidgets, squirms, and, therefore, is not “normal.” There is no scientific or medical proof that this is true.

Learning Disorder: A list of symptoms that psychiatrists say shows a person will have difficulty being able to learn. There is no scientific proof for this either.

Drug: A substance that is taken to remove an unwanted condition or feeling. It can be a poison if a lot is taken. A small amount gives a stimulant (increases activity) reaction, a greater amount can sedate (make drowsy). Too large an

Psychiatry: Hooking

amount can kill. For example, caffeine, found in coffee, is a drug. One or two cups of coffee can “wake you up.” Ten cups would probably put you to sleep; 100 might kill you. A drug is also something that can alter your emotions and your mind and make you feel “high.”

Medicine/Medication: Any substance, such as a drug, used to treat, prevent or cure disease or to improve health.

Psychiatric drugs: Mind- and brain-altering drugs. They are not like normal medicine. Some can be as addictive as illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Psychiatric drugs do not cure or heal a person. They may appear to relieve the person’s fears, upsets or depression, but they don’t cure what is causing these problems.



Your World on Drugs

Brain: A physical organ inside the head that sends and receives messages through the nervous system. It is a physical part of the body, just as an arm, leg or the heart is. It has little to do with thinking. It can physically tell the body that something is hot and warn against touching it, but it doesn't make decisions for you or tell you how to act.

Mind: "A part of the person that knows and thinks and feels and wishes and chooses," the *World Book Dictionary* says. It has a running record of a person's past, almost like a movie.

Cure: To bring back to health, make well; to get rid of.

Heal: To make whole again.

Treat: To relieve or cure.

Vitamins: Substances necessary for growth and good health, found in many foods. They help to nourish (feed and keep alive) the body.

Mental Illness: According to psychiatrists and psychologists, some sort of sickness of the mind, but there is no proof that any such "sickness" exists. This doesn't mean that there aren't problems in life and that a person doesn't feel bad, but it is not caused by the brain.



Psychiatry: Hooking

Do you think you or your friend has a learning “disorder”?

Have you ever read or asked your parents to read the list of symptoms for “hyperactivity” or “ADHD”?

These are some of the symptoms in the ADHD list: makes careless mistakes in schoolwork or other tasks and doesn't complete schoolwork; work is often messy or careless; has difficulty paying attention; finds it hard to persist with activities; appears as if they are not listening.

Hyperactivity is supposed to include these: often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat; often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected; often runs about or climbs a lot when it is inappropriate; often has difficulty playing or sitting quietly; talks too much.

What do these two lists sound like to you? Do they sound like normal behavior for someone who is active with lots of energy?



How long does something you *like* doing keep your attention?

Let's look at it this way. How much attention can you give to what you like doing?

Here's an example. Justin was sent to a boys' home by a children's court. A psychologist had told him he had ADHD because he was disruptive in class. But when the manager of the home asked him, "What's the longest time you've ever talked with a girl on the phone?" Justin answered, "Three to five hours!" And "How long can you play basketball?" "About four hours," Justin answered. He could also read books



Psychiatry: Hooking

that he liked and play video games all day if he could get away with it.

The point is that he could focus his attention on anything that he was interested in. Can you?

There is nothing wrong with your brain...

Some people will try to convince you that ADHD and learning difficulties are the result of something being wrong with your brain.

This is not true. There is no real scientific evidence to prove this. You might be shown lots of colored pictures of the brain, but as neurologist Dr. Fred Baughman Jr. says, the drugs the person has already taken probably caused the changes that appear to be in the brain. Remember, all drugs, whether cocaine, heroin or a psychiatric drug, are brain-altering.

Also, mental problems are not inherited. They are not based on your genes or how your brain works. They are not a physical disease. You can't look at them under a microscope or by using a brain scan or x-ray.

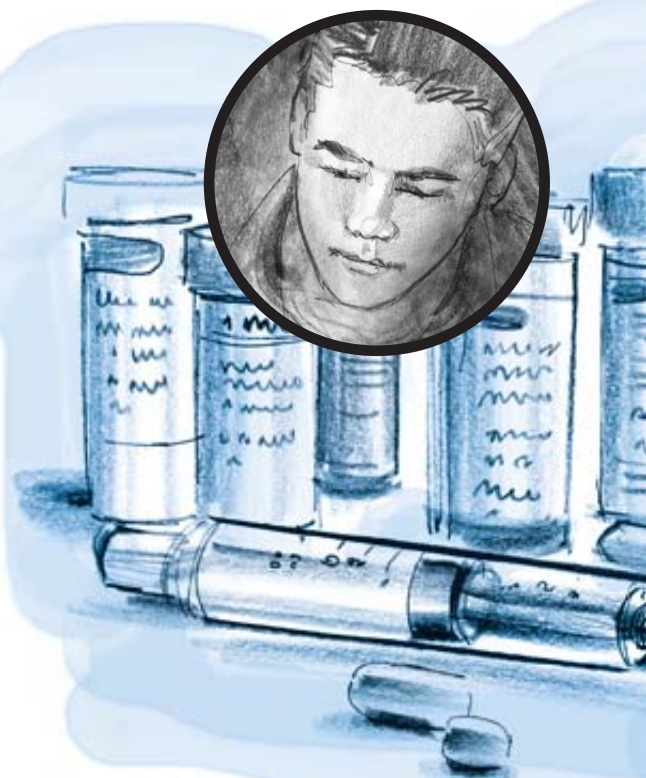
Nor is a psychiatric drug the same as insulin or a headache pill. Diabetes is a condition where the body cannot absorb normal amounts of sugar and starch because a certain part of the body does not produce enough insulin, a substance that enables the body to properly use the sugar.

Dr. Mary Anne Block, author of *No More ADHD*, tells us: "Diabetes is a real medical condition. ADHD is an invented label. Diabetes is an insulin deficiency. Attention and behavioral problems are not a [stimulant drug] deficiency."

Your World on Drugs

The Problem With Psychiatric Drugs

If you are worried about something — a problem in life, relationships with your friends, parents or teachers, how your school grades are going, or you suffer from unwanted feelings — taking any drug, illegal or psychiatric, isn't going to solve the problem. If a drug is used to feel better when you are depressed, sad or anxious, the relief lasts only a short while. If the problem is not fixed or helped, the person can often feel worse than before.



Psychiatry: Hooking

Studies show that psychiatric drugs do not help you learn better. In fact, the learning rate of someone who has been on drugs, legal or illegal, can be much lower than that of a person who hasn't.

Some psychiatric drugs are addictive. Also, as a drug wears off, whatever pain, discomfort or upset that was there before taking the drug can become stronger. It can make a person want to keep taking the drug.

Many of the school shootings in the U.S. have been committed by teenagers who had been prescribed psychiatric drugs and/or were undergoing some sort of psychological program in an attempt to "control their anger." Drug reactions can include agitation, hostility, aggression and suicidal behavior.

The drugs can also make you feel bad when you stop taking them — you can suffer withdrawal symptoms.



Your World on Drugs

What are some reasons for inattention and boredom in class?

If you struggle with paying attention in class, you may be very creative and be very good at art or music or acting.

Do you know that if you don't understand a word you have read, you can become blank, tired, feel like you are "not there", even worry or become upset? And if you keep going you may not wish to continue with your study. You can seem silly or stop what you are doing. When you feel like this it can be because you haven't understood a word or symbol.

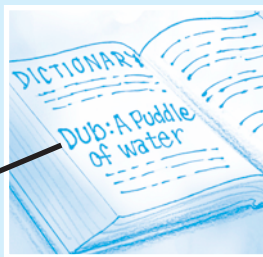
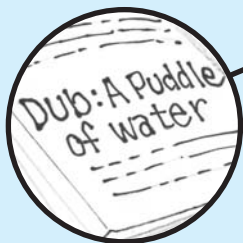
Try doing this exercise.

1 Get a piece of paper and a pencil. Now draw a house and a dub.

For many of you, the house would be easy. But what about the dub? The more you try drawing it and can't, the more blank and stupid you can feel. You could get angry and give up trying to do it.



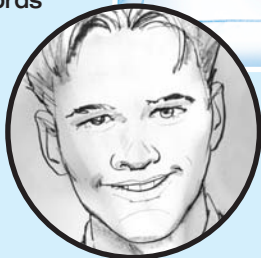
2 But a dictionary tells you that the definition of a “dub” is “a puddle of water.”



3 Now, draw a picture of a house and a dub. You see, you aren't stupid. The ability to study and to do something depends on you understanding the words relating to it.

When you don't understand the words, you can't do that action.

So, if you are told that you have a “learning disability,” first find if there is a word or words you don't understand in what you are reading or studying and ensure that you get a dictionary to help you fully understand the meaning of the word. Then read on from where you found this word.



Your World on Drugs

What else can affect how you think and behave?



Some people can have bad reactions to certain foods that can make them feel or act strangely. These reactions are called “allergies.” The person usually doesn’t know that this is happening to them. Special medical doctors can do tests to determine if a person is having an allergic reaction to something.

The following list shows a few of the things that can look like they are “ADHD” but which are actually either “allergic” reactions or the result of a lack of vitamins (nutrition) in the body.

- High levels of lead from the environment can place children at risk of both school failure and delinquent (bad) behavior. High mercury (chemical) levels in the body may cause agitation.
- Pesticides (chemicals used to kill insects, like fly spray or ant-killer) can create nervousness, poor concentration, irritability, memory problems and depression.
- Too much sugar can make a person “too active” or “hyper.” Our modern-day fast food, which often lacks nutritional value, can also make you feel terrible.

Psychiatry: Hooking

What You Can Do

1. You and your parents have rights. Talk to your parents if you are asked to fill out a psychological questionnaire or test at school. If you don't want to do this, tell them. Based on what you say, you could be sent to a school psychologist or psychiatrist who might suggest putting you on a drug.

2. Make sure you and your parents fully understand the list of side effects of psychiatric drugs if they are prescribed for you. Remember, these are mind- and mood-altering drugs that may change your attitude and mood toward others and life situations.

3. Make sure you have a simple dictionary with you for all your classes. Always look up the definitions of the words you do not know or have difficulty understanding.

4. Also, when you are studying a subject, make sure you have lots of drawings, photos or diagrams of the subject matter so that you have more understanding of it.

5. If you have been prescribed a psychiatric drug, you *must not* stop taking it suddenly or without *parental and medical approval*. You should only come off them with proper medical monitoring.

6. If you do have a problem, talk to someone you trust — a parent, brother or sister, teacher, minister or a friend. But do get help.



Your World on Drugs

Who is the Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)?

CCHR was formed in 1969 by the Church of Scientology and professor of psychiatry and author Dr. Thomas Szasz. It has been investigating and exposing psychiatric abuses, such as labeling and drugging of kids by psychiatrists, for more than 30 years. CCHR has an advisory board of medical doctors, attorneys, actors, musicians, and community leaders.

Called Commissioners, these advisors include award-winning artists.

CCHR has helped reform laws all over the world through its more than 130 chapters in 31 countries, including laws that now protect children and adolescents from harmful psychiatric practices.

We don't give medical or legal advice but we have websites that can provide you with more information and an e-mail address for you to write to.

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WARNING: No one should stop taking any psychiatric drug without the advice and assistance of a competent, non-psychiatric medical doctor.

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The information on pp. 12-13 is excerpted from *The Learning Book*, based on the works of American author, humanitarian and educator L. Ron Hubbard.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER GREEN.