Sharing Stories

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- Introductions

- Overview:
  - The Lived Experience
  - Creating & Sharing the Story
  - Authoring the Story: Publication
  - Survivor
The Lived Experience

This all started in 1979. My own experience of psychosis, from back then, began with my consultant psychiatrist telling me that I had an “illness peculiar to myself”. Whatever this means. I have no idea! This psychiatrist I had for 10 years. When he moved on I was given another psychiatrist and other diagnoses.

This second psychiatrist told me that my perception was “different from everyone else’s”. This confused me as I always thought that as individuals we all have our unique perception of the world. I was further

confused once when I was in my GP’s practice one evening and I could read his computer which said I was a manic-depressive who was schizo-affective and suffered from hypomania. Now, in 2017 we are 38 years down the line. I am still under scrutiny and observation and, of course, medicated. Which is doing my physical well-being no good at all.
Creating & Sharing The Story

• Title from 10 years ago

• Ambition to write

• Using lived experience to help others better understand
  • Sharing the story in different places
    • Including APEX (Poem)
Authoring the Story: Publication

- Impact of hearing the story
  - Encourage to consider publishing this

- Submitted to Psychosis journal
  - Declined publication of poem; invited to submit story

- Editing together

- Resubmitted to journal

- Accepted, requested abstract/summary
  - Work on summary together
In the hands of others: the nightmare begins

Lin Cochrane*

ABSTRACT
To summarise, this article is no easy task: half my life, in less than 150 words. Isolation, loneliness and medication come to mind. The results of medication surely must terrify people. Some agree with medication, even when day to day I see them falling apart physically. I see no "holistic" hope. The "hierarchy" may live well; us at the bottom have very little but meagre survival. Politics is not my forte. I cannot see things improving for people in the community, especially regarding mental health. People in positions of power need to be truly aware of pharmaceutical dangers. Although how can they be? Have they tried the medications? Not that I am aware of. They need to be made more aware of the need for care and compassion. This includes providers in the community. In short: Loneliness, Isolation and Medication have contributed to my Nightmare in the Hands of Others.

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KEYWORDS
First person account; expert-by-experience; psychiatric survivor; isolation; loneliness; psychiatric medication

In the hands of others, in a nightmare. That’s what I felt like lying on a hospital bed, staring into space forever, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. I felt like I was being pushed into an abyss. Dark days, dark skies, drowning rain and yet outside such sunny skies that I couldn’t reach.

Why? I was locked up in a sanatorium. You know, the local psychiatric hospital. Wait a minute. I came here for help. A friendly female senior Social Worker offered me a week’s rest somewhere I never even knew existed. “Of course”, I said, “Rest? Yes please!” But, something went wrong somewhere, some misunderstanding, I know that I shouldn’t be here, but here I am.
On Being A Published Author

• Publication
  • Lin Cochrane (2018) In the hands of others: the nightmare begins, Psychosis, 10:3, 225-227

• Reflections on
  • What it felt like to write
  • What it feels like to be published.
I am a Survivor
Of what
You might say
Of psychiatry I say
And will always use this term.
After 37 years of doctors,
Labels and medication
I have survived them all (so far)
The friends that I have lost
More than I would care to say
They lost their lives and didn’t survive
The Psychiatric Jungle
I’m still here
Should I be pleased I wonder
I jokingly call myself a dinosaur
But a survivor is what I am.
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