



Rethinking Madness: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Our Understanding and Treatment of Psychosis

Paris Williams

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As the recovery research continues to accumulate, we find that the mainstream understanding of schizophrenia and psychosis has lost nearly all credibility:

* After over 100 years and billions of dollars spent on research looking for schizophrenia and other related psychotic disorders in the brain, we still have not found any substantial evidence that these disorders are actually caused by a brain disease.

* We have learned that full recovery from schizophrenia and other related psychotic disorders is not only possible but is surprisingly common.

* We've discovered that those diagnosed in the United States and other "developed" nations are much less likely to recover than those in the poorest countries of the world; furthermore, those diagnosed with a psychotic disorder in the West today may fare even worse than those so diagnosed over 100 years ago.

* We've seen that the long-term use of antipsychotics and the mainstream psychiatric paradigm of care is likely to be causing significantly more harm than benefit, greatly increasing the likelihood that a transient psychotic episode will harden into a chronic psychotic condition.

* And we've learned that many people who recover from these psychotic disorders do not merely return to their pre-psychotic condition, but often undergo a profound positive transformation with far more lasting benefits than harms.

In *Rethinking Madness*, Dr. Paris Williams takes the reader step by step on a highly engaging journey of discovery, exploring how the mainstream understanding of schizophrenia has become so profoundly misguided. He reveals the findings of his own groundbreaking research of people who have fully recovered from schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, weaving the stories of these participants into the existing literature and crafting a surprisingly clear and coherent vision of the entire psychotic process, from onset to full recovery.

As this vision unfolds, we discover . . .

. . . common factors associated with onset, deepening, and recovery from psychosis

. . . a way to make some sense out of the anomalous experiences occurring within psychosis

. . . lasting transformations that often occur as a result of going through a psychotic process

. . . common lasting harms and benefits of the psychotic process

. . . ways to support those struggling with psychotic experiences while also coming to appreciate the important ways that these individuals can contribute to society

. . . a deeper sense of appreciation for the profound wisdom and resilience that lie within all of our beings, even those we may think of as being deeply disturbed

. . . that by gaining a deeper understanding of madness, we gain a deeper understanding of the core existential dilemmas with which we all must struggle, arriving at the unsettling realization of just how thin

the boundary really is between madness and sanity

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