

Welcome to Choice in Mental Health Care Campaign

Learn about the goals of the MindFreedom Campaign for Choice in Mental Health Care



Latest news:

MindFreedom International launches searchable Directory of Alternatives, which agree to MFI principles.

For the news announcement about the Directory of Alternatives, [click here](#).

To watch the Choice Committee's Webinar "Take Charge of Your Mind" on Youtube for free, [click here](#).

Background

MindFreedom Choice in Mental Health Care Campaign has launched a searchable, screened online directory of humane alternatives to the traditional mental health system!

The focus on a directory emerges from MindFreedom International's successful conference/retreat to support the growth of workable alternatives to the mental health system.

You may read a brief news report about the conference/retreat [here](#).

To read the keynote speech "Inspiration for a Creative Revolution" by Janet Foner, [click here](#).

The conference showcased existing alternatives, brainstorming about new ones, exchanging resources about starting alternatives, and celebrating individual strategies for recovery.

Pictured here is an aerial view of the beautiful Connecticut retreat center where MindFreedom held its conference entitled *Creative Revolution in Healing: Turn Our Minds Around*.

Additional information on the MFI July 2007 conference.

Too often, traditional mental health services keep clients stuck in the system, keeping people from having choices about their lives. The emphasis on medical solutions, especially psychiatric drugs, has become problematic for many. We are seeking new ways of taking charge of our lives, new answers to finding our way out of the mental health system, new roads to our own recovery.

We are currently seeking sponsorship by interested groups and organizations to help us realize these goals. Coming out of this conference, we want to form a network of groups and organizations that would be a member subgroup of MindFreedom International, that promote or provide such alternatives. We also plan to develop an interactive website directory of these services.

If you would like to become involved in the Choice Campaign, please email creativerevolution@mindfreedom.org.

The MindFreedom Campaign for Choice in Mental Health Committee is led by Janet Foner, chair; Matt Morissey, co-chair and co-secretary; Celia Brown, Conference Coordinator; Florence Brown, co-secretary.

Why become active in the MindFreedom Campaign for choice? We asked two of the participants, to read their answers see the related items below.

Related content

-  [MindFreedom Retreat "Insanely Supportive"](#)
-  [Why we're active in the Campaign for Choice in Mental Health Care](#)

About Us

MindFreedom International is a nonprofit organization that unites 100 sponsor and affiliate grassroots groups with thousands of individual members to win human rights and alternatives for people labeled with psychiatric disabilities.



MindFreedom Vision

A nonviolent revolution in mental health care.

MindFreedom Mission Statement

"In a spirit of mutual cooperation, MindFreedom leads a nonviolent revolution of freedom, equality, truth and human rights that unites people affected by the mental health system with movements for justice everywhere."

WHO's Saraceno Calls MindFreedom's Work "Remarkable, Fair, Transparent."

The head of the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) mental health department, Dr. Benedetto Saraceno, has issued a statement about MindFreedom International, calling MFI's work "remarkable... fair... transparent." For the complete WHO statement [click here](#).



- Win human rights campaigns in mental health.
- Challenge abuse by the psychiatric drug industry.
- Support the self-determination of psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers.
- Promote safe, humane and effective options in mental health.

MFI: United Independent Activism for Human Rights & Alternatives!

You are invited to join MFI as a member today!

MindFreedom Staff

David W. Oaks, Director

[Click here to check out info about David W. Oaks, Director of MFI, including a blog, brief biography, speeches, training and more.](#)

Shasta Halley, Director of Member Services

MindFreedom International Board of Directors

- Celia Brown, Board President
- Krista Erickson

- Janet Foner
- Al Galves, PhD
- Mary Maddock
- Matt Morrissey

About the MFI Board of Directors

MindFreedom Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board, comprised of psychiatrists and psychologists, plays a crucial role in MindFreedom's success.

[Click here to learn more about the scientific advisory board.](#)

MindFreedom Office Contact Information

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toll free: 1-877-MAD-PRIDE or 1-877-623-7743

[Link to office location on Google map, click here.](#)

Who Is MindFreedom?

MindFreedom International is where the power of mutual support combines with the power of human rights activism. MindFreedom International is where democracy is finally getting hands on with the mental health system. Join, donate and become active!

To see a few photos and statements by MindFreedom members, [click here:](#)

<http://www.mindfreedom.org/photos>

The majority of MindFreedom's members are people who have experienced human rights violations in the

mental health system, or *psychiatric survivors*. However, *everyone* who supports human rights is invited and encouraged to join and become active leaders. Mental health professionals and workers, advocates and attorneys, family members and the general public are all active as equal members and leaders in the MindFreedom International family. Our sponsor and affiliate groups are among the key leading organizations to change the mental health system.

MindFreedom is one of the very few totally independent groups in the mental health field with no funding from or control by governments, drug companies, religions, corporations, or the mental health system. MindFreedom International is a nonprofit under IRS 501(c)(3) that is the only group of its kind accredited by the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with Consultative Roster Status.

Adbusters Magazine (May/June 2002) called MindFreedom the "epicenter of the mad movement"!

MindFreedom Story

Inspired by the civil rights and other movements, in about 1970 many psychiatric survivors, dissident mental health professionals and advocates formed a diverse international effort to change the mental health system. MindFreedom is directly rooted in this international social change movement.

In 1986 the project that would eventually become MindFreedom International began as a newsletter called *Dendron* published by Clearinghouse on Human Rights and Psychiatry and funded with a start-up grant from the Levinson Foundation. In May 1990 a coalition was formed during a counter-conference and peaceful protest to the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in New York City. This network was named Support Coalition International. In August 2005 Support Coalition International changed its name to MindFreedom International.




Some of our members have been human rights activists for more than 30 years, and others for only 30 days. All are welcome! We at MindFreedom International are proud of more than two decades of successful activism, advocacy, peaceful protest, public education, mutual support, lobbying, organizing and never ever giving up our dream: Equal opportunity of mental and emotional well being for all.

MindFreedom's office is located in the historic Growers Market in downtown Eugene, Oregon. MindFreedom, as a tenant, is part of the community of social change groups and food co-op. You can see our windows from the Amtrak station, within the Growers Market mural, [click here](#). Members are encouraged to drop by and visit!

Your membership, participation, support and active leadership are welcome and encouraged!

Join MFI today, or renew your membership early, [click here!](#)

Related content

-  [Other questions asked about MFI](#)
-  [MFI Frequently Asked Questions](#)
-  [MindFreedom International Logo](#)

Introductory FAQ's about MFI

Most Frequently Asked Questions about MindFreedom International itself: How did MFI start? How do you join? Is MFI independent? And more!

What is MindFreedom International?

MindFreedom International is an independent nonprofit that unites 100 grassroots groups and thousands of members to peacefully take action for human rights in the mental health system. While we are open to the public, a majority of our members identify themselves as "psychiatric survivors," that is, individuals who have personally experienced human rights violations in the mental health system. All who support human rights are welcome to join. MFI members and leaders include mental health professionals, advocates, attorneys and family members.

How did MFI start?

The project that became MFI began in 1986 as a newsletter called Dendron funded by the Levinson Foundation. In May 1990 readers held a counter-conference and protest of the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in New York City, and 13 groups began an alliance that became named Support Coalition International. The spirit of what we are doing, and many of our key leaders, are rooted in the social change movement founded by psychiatric survivors that began in about 1970. MFI has Non-Governmental Organization Consultative Roster Status in the United Nations.

Is MFI an independent organization?

Absolutely, MFI is totally independent. MFI activities receive zero funding from and have zero links with the government, drug companies, mental health systems or religions. MFI's policy of independence is similar to the Amnesty International pledge that "AI is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion." (In fact, MFI is independent from AI, too!)

In fact, MFI is one of the very few totally 100% independent organizations in the mental health field. The vast majority other organizations in the mental health field, with a few rare exceptions, receive substantial funding from and have links with the mental health system, government, drug companies and/or a religion. MFI is funded by individual members like you, by occasional non-governmental independent foundation grants, and by sales of Mad Market books and gear.

Aren't all critics of psychiatry linked to the Church of Scientology?

No. To repeat, MindFreedom International has zero links with or funding from any religious organization. MFI has zero links with or funding from the Church of Scientology, or its group Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR).

This is one of the most frequently asked questions asked of activists who are critical of human rights violations by the mental health system. Why? For decades, some psychiatric industry representatives have made false claims that all critics of psychiatric abuse must be connected to Scientology or its organization CCHR. This is incorrect. Apparently, the intent of these industry representatives is to claim there is only one critic of the mental health profession, and then discredit that one opponent. However, the fact is there are many individuals and groups with reasonable criticisms of psychiatry that, like MFI, have absolutely no link to Scientology or CCHR. MFI was started by psychiatric survivors; and while some industry defenders may be surprised, we psychiatric survivors are capable of organizing on our own, and we have good reasons to organize!

Our intent in this response is to state the truth, and not to criticize any individuals or groups active with CCHR. Also, MFI has a firm anti-bigotry position, and we will not take part in prejudice toward any individual because of their religious choices. But the reality is that MFI is independent. If anything, journalists ought to quiz industry defenders more thoroughly about their own sources of funding! MFI is one of the rare totally independent groups in the mental health field.

To emphasize and clarify our independence, MindFreedom's attorney David Atkin has provided a signed letter, a PDF of that letter is available [here](#).

How can I find out more information about MFI?

One of the best sources is this web site www.MindFreedom.org. You may find out about campaigns, sponsor groups, board, and more. In the section on this web site called "ABOUT US" you'll find information about MindFreedom's mission, goals, staff, board and contact information. Under the section called "NEWS" you'll find several categories -- some news specifically about MFI and some on general news.

How can I join MFI?

MindFreedom is a membership-driven organization, one of the very few independently-funded groups, supported by members, and dedicated to taking action for human rights. The recommended annual donation for membership is \$35, low income \$20, but people give what they can, when they can. Please note that MindFreedom is largely a group of low-income people, and no one has ever been turned down for membership due to low funds, though the board does require "something from everyone" unless you have no access to funds at all. You are encouraged to join for however much you can afford! For information on joining by web, phone, e-mail, mail or fax, see the join/renew/donate link on this web site.

What are MindFreedom's vision, mission and goals?

Vision: A nonviolent revolution in mental health care.

Mission: In a spirit of mutual cooperation, MindFreedom leads a nonviolent revolution of freedom, equality, truth and human rights that unites people affected by the mental health system with movements for justice everywhere.

Main goals:

- Win human rights campaigns in mental health, such as opposing coerced, forced and fraudulent mental health procedures.
- Challenge abuse by the psychiatric drug industry.
- Support the self-determination and voice of psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers.
- Promote safe, humane and effective options in mental health.

How can I network with other members and keep up to date with news?

Once you are a member of MindFreedom, you may join any of our member-only e-mail lists. There are a wide variety of e-mail lists: some are for news, some for mutual support, one is on electroshock, and much more. There's a list for members who wish to volunteer, and sometimes we forward questions we receive there. The main umbrella list for members is an announcement list to keep up-to-date with news releases, member notices, etc. It's very easy to join any or all of these e-mail lists now via the web. You may read about these e-mail lists and find out how to join them directly via the web once you're a MindFreedom member by going to the "Member Only" section.

For individuals who are interested in forming a new MindFreedom regional affiliate, we can sometimes help you network with members in your geographic area. You can ask the office about that. Please note that when networking with a person new to you, this person does not represent MindFreedom, and MindFreedom makes no guarantee about the results of this networking, and you are encouraged to use the same discretion you would whenever you network with a stranger.

How can I find out about MindFreedom Journal and submit articles?

The MindFreedom Journal is a good way to find out about what MindFreedom and its members and sponsor groups are doing.

The *MindFreedom Journal* welcomes articles, letters to the editor, art work, etc. Please refer to the journal for the kind of articles we usually use, and to get a feel for the approximate word length. The best way to submit an article is via e-mail to office (at) mindfreedom.org. Please note poetry submissions ought to go directly to the poetry editor Bonnie Schell at poetry (at) mindfreedom.org

What is the MFI Shield Program?

Registration for the MFI shield is now online, and MFI members are welcome to sign up for free. The MindFreedom Shield Program is a coordinated registration system and solidarity network of MindFreedom members who want to have as much protection as possible from coerced or forced psychiatric treatment. The MindFreedom Shield is **not** meant to replace a formal "advance directive," which is a legal document we highly recommend people fill out. If a member who has registered a MindFreedom Shield is verifiably found by MindFreedom to be threatened to coerced or forced psychiatric treatment, an alert will be sent to the MindFreedom Solidarity Network on that person's behalf.

Everyone in the MindFreedom Solidarity Network is expected to participate in constructive, nonviolent action recommended in the alert received to support the person for whom an alert has been issued. While we cannot guarantee the results of issuing alerts, it has been our experience that public awareness can often reduce, if not end, situations of coerced or forced psychiatric treatment. See the shield area of this web site for more information.

How can I get more active and involved with MFI?

Read the MFI Journal and this web site carefully. Once you are a member, be sure to sign up on the e-mail lists you are interested in, including the "volunteer" e-mail list. Watch for alerts and projects you can assist on. If you have specific skills or interests, feel free to contact the office to offer assistance. Because of low resources, a key part of volunteering is your own persistence and follow-through. Your initiative is much appreciated, and we'll do what we can to support your efforts to be more active! MindFreedom and its sponsor groups are involved in a wide range of activities, from leafleting and rallying to a presence inside the United Nations. Our goal is to provide the resources for each and every member to reach the leadership they wish.

How can I find out more about sponsor and affiliate groups of MFI?

MindFreedom unites about 100 grassroots groups in a dozen countries for human rights and alternatives. Some are small, some are large. Many of them are engaged every day in providing alternatives and working for human rights. A basic directory of sponsor and affiliate groups is in the public area of MFI web site.

Within the "For MFI Members" folder we have more information about affiliates and sponsors, including a more detailed directory with e-mail contact information. We also explain how you can help form an affiliate or sponsor, and support other members who are organizing on the grassroots level.

How can I get occasional mental health human rights alerts via e-mail?

Whether or not you join MindFreedom now, you are invited to receive free public human rights alerts. These are only e-mailed out occasionally, one-way, so you do not get too much e-mail. This way, from time to time, you will find out about news releases, updates, alerts, etc. Sign up for these free alerts about human

rights in psychiatry on this web site.

I am very low income, how can I join MindFreedom International?

Many of the members in MindFreedom International are very low income. However, multiplied together we have strength in numbers. MindFreedom is not supported by corporations, government, religions or drug companies, and so we must all find a way to support MindFreedom's human rights work. The suggested regular membership rate is \$35 per year. The suggested low-income membership rate is \$20. Individuals may also give more than once during the year, or even monthly, in order to pay for that annual rate. No membership is turned down for lack of funds. For more information on the MFI member discount policy click [here](#). For information joining and donating to MindFreedom, including online, click [here](#).

May I copy and use printed material and graphics from MindFreedom International?

Except for written material, photographs, etc. where the copyright is retained by the individual creator, you are encouraged to use any and all of the materials on the MFI web site and other MFI sources with, as the bottom of each MFI web page explains, some rights reserved under the "*Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 2.5*."

What is Creative Commons, and what does that mean?

In other words, "You are free: to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work, and to make derivative works, under the following conditions: Attribution. You must give the original author credit [including the www.MindFreedom.org web site]. Non-Commercial. You may not use this work for commercial purposes."

Click the "CC" button on the very bottom of any MFI web page for more information about the Creative Commons. For other uses of MFI web site or other material or to answer questions, contact the MFI office.

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How may I contact MFI?

Just click [here](#)!

In case you printed this out, here is MindFreedom's contact information:

Postal mail

MindFreedom International
P.O. Box 11284
Eugene, OR 97440-3484 USA

Office street address

(for delivery of boxes, UPS, Federal Express, etc.)

MindFreedom International
454 Willamette, Suite 216
Eugene, OR 97401-2643 USA

Office phone

(541) 345-9106

Toll Free Member Services Phone in USA

1-877-MAD-PRID[e] or 1-877-623-7743

Fax

(480) 287-8833







E-mail

office@mindfreedom.org

Web

www.mindfreedom.org

Related content

-  [How can I write my own human rights alert?](#)
-  [Other questions asked about MFI](#)
-  [FAQ for those seeking other resources](#)
-  [Why join MFI?](#)
-  [How do I get free MFI news public email alerts?](#)
-  [Attorney letter about MFI independence](#)

Mad Pride events

Here are a few of the successful Mad Pride events that were registered with MindFreedom International.



Mad Pride

BELOW are Mad Pride events received by MindFreedom International.

On right is a photo from one of many MindFreedom Ghana street marches in Accra. The sign in the middle opposes involuntary psychiatric procedures.

Do you have a Mad Pride event that you would like to see listed on this site? Just [click here](#) and complete our online form!

Mad Pride Past Events Sampler

MindFreedom has folders of a few Mad Pride events we've heard about, by year.



THIS IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE LIST, just a sampling of events to inspire you!

To browse some of these events, click here:

<http://www.mindfreedom.org/campaign/madpride/events/>

"Curing Normality: The Mental Health Revolution" - Talk by David Oaks

David Oaks will speak at Capitol Theater in Olympia, Washington at this free event.

What	
When	Mar 04, 2011 from 07:00 PM to 09:00 PM
Where	Capitol Theater in Olympia, Washington
Contact Name	Levi Chambers
Attendees	All welcome. Free.
Add event to calendar	 vCal  iCal

Free event:

Curing Normality: The Mental Health Revolution.

A talk with David Oaks of MindFreedom International.

March 4th, 2011, 7PM. At the Capitol Theater in Olympia, Washington, USA.

Presented by BRICK and co-sponsored by the Evergreen Icarus Project.

For too long people with mental illness labels have suffered human rights violations. With virtually no due process, anyone can be labeled "abnormal" and detained indefinitely, and even forcibly drugged or administered ECT. David Oaks, founder of MindFreedom International, has been working since 1976 to protect the rights of psychiatric patients around the world. His story explains how a small group of activists with little money survived against pharmaceutical corporations, and gives vision for a better future.

The link between the "mad movement" and the cross-disability movement is crucial.

The psychiatric survivor/mental health consumer movement -- also known as 'mad movement' -- accelerated in the early 1970's at about the same time as the general cross-disability movement that addresses concerns of all people who end up with some type of disability label.

The social change movement led by psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers entered a new era of growth in the early 1970's, at about the same time people diagnosed with physical disabilities were also holding protests and gaining more basic rights.

The intersection between all movements is important.

However, because of pioneer work by activists such as Justin Dart and Rae Unzicker, the intersection between what is sometimes affectionately called the "mad" movement and "crip" movement is an especially crucial one.


The cross-disability movement has a rainbow approach, to include all those who are given a disability label. In fact, some have named it the movement of the "dis-labeled." A challenge is questioning the domination of what is considered "normal."

It's a complicated intersection, but for clarity just look for the banner of "freedom," and keep your eyes on the prize.

If you accept your diagnosis of a disability, and see this in traditional medical terms, you are welcome in both movements. If you totally reject your label of disabled, as gay and lesbian people did when they successfully removed their direct label from the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, you are also welcome. We all unite under the banner of freedom.

MindFreedom director David Oaks, who also has a physical disability (related to ankylosing spondylitis) has written a brief essay about this intersection, published by a disability liberation web site, and you may find a link to the article by clicking "related content."

Related content

-  On Butterflies, the Future of Disability Rights & Mad Pride