Reading List: books to read for World Mental Health Day

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10th October is World Mental Health Day, and this year charities are working to shine a light on schizophrenia. In this Reading List we bring together a selection of book reviews and blog posts on mental health, stress, and the work-life balance in academia. Find out more information about World Mental Health Day.

Interested in the history of psychiatry and antipsychotic drugs?

The Bitterest Pills: The Troubling Story of Antipsychotic Drugs by Joanna Moncrieff

Antipsychotic drugs have become some of the biggest blockbusters of the early 21st century, increasingly prescribed not just to people with schizophrenia or other severe forms of mental disturbance but for a range of more common psychological complaints. In this book Joanna Moncrieff challenges the accepted account that portrays antipsychotics as specific treatments that target an underlying brain disease and explores early views suggesting, in contrast, that antipsychotics achieve their effects by inducing a state of neurological suppression. Much of the book is a detailed and thorough unpicking of the troubled history of psychiatry and antipsychotic drugs, but this is far from a one sided story, writes Sally Brown. Read the full review.
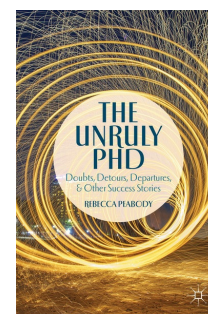
Find this book: amazon

Interested in managing the ups and downs of PhD life?

The Unruly PhD: Doubts, Detours, Departures, & Other Success Stories by Rebecca Peabody

This book is a useful and comforting resource for anyone interested in understanding how individuals get through their PhD journeys and negotiate their career choices. Most importantly, this book reminds us that there is a greater world beyond academia, and that it is OK to pursue alternative paths, writes Sin Yee Koh. Read the full review.

Find this book: amazon

Interview: Five minutes with Richard Layard: "Mental illness is the biggest single cause of misery in our society"

In an interview with Joel Suss, editor of the LSE British Politics and Policy blog, Richard Layard discusses the importance of combating mental illness and his new book, *Thrive: The Power of Evidence-Based Psychological Therapies*, which he co-authored with David Clark.

In *Thrive* you show that 1 out of every 6 adults in Britain suffers from a mental health disorder, yet only 1 in 3 people suffering will receive treatment. You have called this "one of the great injustices of our time". How did we get to this situation?

The fundamental reason is that until recent decades there really weren't any treatments for depression or anxiety disorders which could be shown to make a difference. The first advances were in drug treatments but these had

quite small effects on the danger of relapse. The biggest and most important advance has been in psychological treatments, both because they have much longer lasting effects and because they're what most patients want. One reason for the under-treatment was that people just didn't want to take the drugs with the side effects they entailed. What they wanted was to be helped to get control over their own mental life, and that's what the psychological therapies enable people to do.

That said, it's some time since these therapies became pretty well established and the shocking thing was that up to 2008 these evidence-based therapies, in particular cognitive behavioural therapy but also interpersonal therapy and other therapies, which are recommended by Britain's standards agency called NICE [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence], were meant to be provided by law according to the statutes of the NHS. But the guidelines for mental illness and particularly depression anxiety disorders were being completely disregarded by the National Health Service.

Read the full interview here.

Blog post: Confusion over how to measure mental health is taking a toll on workplace wellbeing

Due to the confusion over what counts as evidence, mental health research has largely failed to make a significant impact on workplace wellbeing and employment relations practices. On the LSE Impact Blog, Elizabeth Cotton argues that in order to make a positive difference, academic research will have to involve new technologies and communication strategies aimed at helping people to improve their mental health at work.
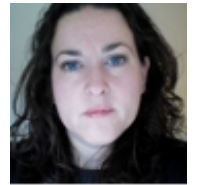
Academics in the field of mental health have to take blogging and social media seriously in this impact driven epoch. Ideas have to be read and used and this requires a way of seducing the reader to think about ideas that does not immediately offer simple solutions to complex problems. This is profoundly important for those of us working in the field of mental health at work, where the evidence-based fight is ongoing between different models and methods of understanding in addressing the mental health crisis that is looming in the recession.

Read the full blog post here.

Schizophrenia: The Facts from Mental Health Foundation

Schizophrenia is a diagnosis given to some people who have severely disrupted beliefs and experiences. At least 26 million people are living with schizophrenia worldwide according to the World Health Organization, and many more are indirectly affected by it. More including posters and downloads at the Mental Health Foundation.
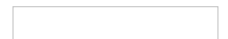
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