

Campaigning for change: Ideas from the work of Gene Sharp - Dave Harper



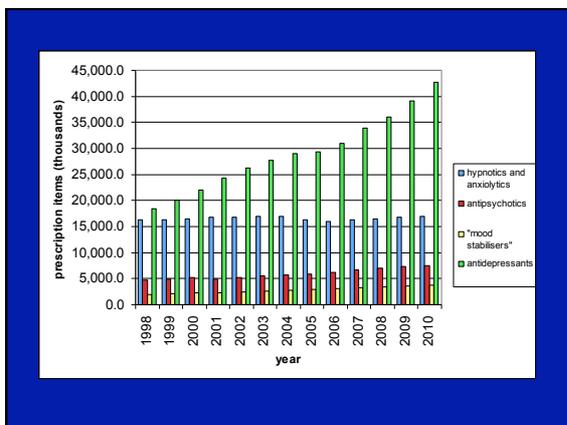
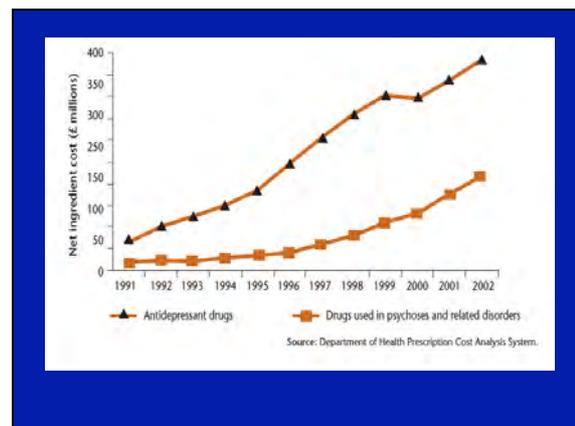
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Dave Harper

Are things getting better?

- Better:
 - more optimism (recovery approach)
 - peer support
 - more talking therapies
 - more focus on supporting people into work
 - End of Victorian asylums

- No change or worsening:
 - Over-emphasis on risk
 - increasing medicalisation (society, settings)
 - few survivor-run crisis houses
 - Soteria model not taken up
 - psychiatric diagnosis (eg DSM)
 - over-emphasis on medication
 - No real choice of treatment/therapy
 - sectioning (twice the level of 1980s)
 - discrimination (eg employment)
 - Social inequality increasing
 - NHS is reactive and little focus on prevention
 - Little research money goes to social projects compared with biomedical projects



What is our model of change?

- More understanding leads to change which leads to policy and legal change
 - Or?
- Oppressed groups campaign for changes in policy and law, which leads to broader social change

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What can we learn from campaigners?

- Gene Sharp -- Political theorist of non-violent resistance to totalitarian dictatorships
- Possible to adapt for other contexts
- Common problem for resistance movements is dependence on one or two campaigning methods



- A key issue is to 'identify the dictatorship's pillars of support and develop a strategy for undermining each' (Arrow, 2011)
- Need for different tactics with each 'pillar':
 - Professional disciplines
 - Other institutions (including the academy, funding bodies and journals)
 - The pharmaceutical industry
 - Some of those in distress and their relatives
 - The public
 - The media
 - Policymakers
 - Public and commercial health bureaucracies

- Important to remember that these sources of support are not monolithic
- Within each 'pillar' there is some resistance
 - there is debate within the academy and amongst practitioners
 - many of those in distress find diagnoses unhelpful
 - there are also policymakers and journalists who are critical of diagnosis
- An important issue is how these critics may be supported and linked together
- Moreover, important to learn from successful campaigns in the past

- Sharp (2012) suggests that it is important for campaigners to focus on issues which are 'widely recognized and thus hard to neglect' (p.92)



- E.g. Campaign against pathologisation of homosexuality broadly successful (followed demonstrations by gay and lesbian activists in early 1970s)
- E.g. in 1980s, *That's Life*, the light-hearted BBC consumer rights programme and charity Mind, began a large-scale public campaign against the over-prescription of minor tranquillisers, which led to major policy changes (Lacey & Woodward, 1985).

- Important to gain traction with the public through the media
- Example of debates about the DSM:
 - Connect criticism of diagnosis with common media topics with 'news value' (e.g. investigatory stories, human interest stories etc)
 - For example, change in diagnostic criteria has led to iatrogenic 'epidemics'
 - This has led to increased demand on health services
 - Increased public expenditure on medication
 - Increased pharmaceutical company profits

- Danger of being reactive, constantly responding to the actions of the other.
- Danger of naively thinking that simply by stating one's goal or living according to their ideals that change will come.
- Start with low risk methods, focusing on issues which are widely recognized and thus hard to neglect:
 - Employment discrimination
 - megadosing (36% prescribed over BNF limits; 43% on more than one antipsychotic)
 - lack of choice and full information about side effects
 - lack of access to talking treatments (10% with diagnosis of schizophrenia)
 - unethical behavior by drug companies

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- Always think of the next steps – requires strategic analysis not simply tactical process.
- Not every action needs total support. Can have a number of 'selective resistance' campaigns, possibly overlapping
- Important to have small victories – maintains morale but also leads to momentum. Should aim at one or more weakness
- Have campaigns taken on by different groups on issues of concern to them (eg journalists, religious leaders etc).
- Allow time for breaks and a rest to avoid burnout!

198 Methods of Nonviolent Action

- **Formal Statements**
 1. Public Speeches
 2. Letters of opposition or support
 3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
 4. Signed public statements
 5. Declarations of indictment and intention
 6. Group or mass petitions
- **Communications with a Wider Audience**
 7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
 8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
 9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
 10. Newspapers and journals
 11. Records, radio, and television
 12. Skywriting and earthwriting
- **Group Representations**
 13. Deputations
 14. Mock awards
 15. Group lobbying
 16. Picketing
 17. Mock elections
- **Symbolic Public Acts**
 18. Displays of flags and symbolic colours
 19. Wearing of symbols
 20. Prayer and worship
 21. Delivering symbolic objects
 22. Protest disruptions
 23. Destruction of own property
 24. Symbolic lights
 25. Displays of portraits
 26. Paint as protest
 27. New signs and names
 28. Symbolic sounds
 29. Symbolic reclamations
 30. Rude gestures
- **Pressures on Individuals**
 31. "Haunting" officials
 32. Taunting officials
 33. Fraternalization
 34. Vigils
- **Drama and Music**
 35. Humorous skits and pranks
 36. Performances of plays and music
 37. Singing

- Albert Einstein Institution: <http://www.aeinstein.org/>
- Free online copy of *From Dictatorship to Democracy*: <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FDTD.pdf>
- How to Start a Revolution film: <http://howtostartarevolutionfilm.com>



*Dictators are never as strong as they tell you they are.
People are never as weak as they think they are*

Gene Sharp

The logo features a red circular target with a white bullseye. Inside the target, there are several small, colorful figures of people in various poses, some appearing to be in motion or falling. Below the target, the text "That's all Folks!" is written in a stylized, cursive font.