

Volunteers in Psychotherapy

Celebrating **17** Years of Community Achievement

1999

VIP is an IRS-approved Charitable Nonprofit [EIN # 06-1532207]

2016

DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The heart of VIP's work is private conversations. We talk with people about personal matters they wouldn't discuss anywhere else – one person grapples with a sister's suicide, another copes with sexual violence she sustained, while another person deals with incest or a tragic accident. Someone else fitfully describes the intense and demeaning family rejection they absorbed because they are gay, while others struggle to understand their difficulties establishing durable relationships after a divorce or a neglectful childhood where adults abused substances.

17 Year ANNIVERSARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- >610 People/Families Helped
- More than 24,000 hours of volunteer work earned 6,000 therapy sessions
- Less than 3% missed sessions
- 200+ individual donors
- 119 grants from 37 foundations
- Feature articles & interviews in:
 - New York Times
 - Psychology Today
 - Hartford Courant
 - Family Therapy Networker
 - Mental Health Weekly
 - National Public Radio
 - Psychotherapy Finances
 - New England Psychologist
 - National Psychologist
 - www.MentalHelp.net
 - CT Life Publications
 - APA Monitor on Psychology
- Ongoing lecture/film fund-raisers co-hosted by local universities
- Presentations for: American Psychological Association, UCLA, Yale, Wesleyan, Trinity, UConn, CCSU, Suffolk U., U of Hartford, Saint Joseph's, Manchester CC, CT Conference on Volunteerism
- Free consultations with 100+ therapists nationwide, helping them construct their own VIP's.
- Awards from the Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA), PsychJourney Laurel, American Institute of Medical Education (AIMED)

Real life problems are often complicated and take time to come into clear view. People may have good reasons to hold onto secrets. It may take many discussions before a person comes to see that there could be other valid perspectives on their difficulties from the one they originally held -- or that there might be reasons why they cling to one problematic viewpoint.

Think of people in your own life who may not admit that they are unhappy and drink too much, or that they're carrying on a difficulty from their own upbringing in how they're raising their own child now – perhaps criticizing the child too much, or being too permissive in reaction to an overbearing parent they grew up with. Or, someone may not realize how they inhibit their own happiness – being too self-critical or abusive without even recognizing it.

Changes to a happier or more productive approach may take time to develop – but they're “sweet” and greatly satisfying when they do. VIP's work is very gratifying, because you know that you're talking to people about things that matter deeply in their lives; often difficulties that have turned into nagging problems long before the person sought help through VIP... we see the long slog back into some hard-fought self-improvement that is highly individualized.

This year it looks like we'll provide significantly more service than in the last two years, which were already close to our historic average. But it's the quality of these discussions, not their quantity, which is the impressive achievement.

The alternative, in the public mental health system, is misguided. People come to us for help after they were misled by agencies where they were coerced into taking sedative psychiatric medication, or even electro-convulsive [shock] “treatment” or were sometimes forced into hospitalization.

Thank You again for your support of our work; **your individual donation** makes it possible for us to offer VIP's charitable service during a time of slow economic recovery. As you know, **the IRS requires a minimum level of tax-deductible giving by individuals** in proportion to charitable grants, in order to maintain our nonprofit-charitable status.

So your personal gift to VIP is very important, in more ways than one... and you partner with many people who share your belief in this more effective and humane approach.

If you can continue to help us with a donation this year – please do. If you can increase your gift, it will help VIP to assist more people.

Thank you. Richard Shulman, Ph.D., Director on behalf of VIP's Boards

VIP, Advocacy group and University host “Healing Voices” documentary

VIP partnered with Advocacy Unlimited and the undergraduate Psi Chi Psychology Honors program at the University of Hartford in screening the award-winning documentary “Healing Voices.” HV follows the lives of several substantially recovered individuals after an earlier period of emotional upset and confusion. Their lives are now more stable, and they have friends, satisfying jobs and families. They now question the meaning of their previously “diagnosed mental illness.” A panel discussion followed. VIP also participated at Manchester Community College’s screening of HV, where the film’s protagonist and producer also spoke.

Sad recent news: Former VIP Board Member, Dr. Bill Olds, has just passed away. Bill helped oversee VIP’s work and policy for years, after a full career as the first full-time Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of CT. Bill has been remembered as “a friend to the marginalized, an ally to the vulnerable and a champion of civil liberties for all.”

To earn sessions, VIP clients have volunteered in hospitals, health clinics for poor people or underserved groups, homeless shelters, programs for veterans, ex-cancer patients, seniors, scouts and at Habitat for Humanity. They’ve donated blood to the Red Cross & hair to Locks of Love. They’ve worked as firefighters, literacy volunteers, tax aides, serving in libraries, nonprofit farms and other groups that feed hungry people. Four hours of work earn each VIP session.

New book documents misleading research supporting psychiatric diagnosis and medication:

Psychiatry Under the Influence meticulously and incisively demonstrates how the field of “mental health” has been hijacked and reframed. The public has been misled to believe that people’s emotional distress and confusion are scientifically documented to be matters of biological disease – “chemical imbalances” and “brain disorders” that necessitate “treatment” by pharmaceutical products.

This book demonstrates how biased, unscientific and propagandistic these assertions are ... and how they were manipulated into existence. The authors document how the American Psychiatric Association...encourage[d] the unsubstantiated perspective that science had validated and reliably differentiated categories of medical disease-like problems.

The evidence is powerful, consistent and painstakingly researched. The authors document that the profession has never provided a single validated bio marker to demonstrate that [psychiatric labels] can be identified as being caused by or undeniably linked to any lesion or biological malfunction.... [citing] statements decrying the lack of validity and reliability in such “diagnoses” and the lack of any proven biological substrate.... by National Institute of Mental Health directors, DSM task force chairs and numerous prominent academic psychiatrists...

...a thoroughly researched exposé substantiated by over 600 citations. The lead author won the Investigative Reporters and Editors prize for best book of 2010 for *Anatomy of an Epidemic* and the second author has often published investigations of conflicts of interest in psychiatry.

The authors repeatedly invoke the concept of institutional corruption [not individual blame].... But a generation of the public has been misled and mistreated.

No professional in the field can provide accurate informed consent to the people we serve – especially regarding the purported biomedical bases of “psychiatric disorders” and the efficacy of psychiatric medications -- unless we face the travesty that these authors have unearthed, thoroughly documented and organized for our review.

Excerpts of a VIP book review published in *The National Psychologist* in September, 2016. Readers of this book will better understand the problematic and misleading professional climate that was one of several powerful factors leading to the development of VIP.

Thank you FRIENDS of VIP 200+ Generous Donors

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**Volunteers in Psychotherapy, Inc. provides psychotherapy that is truly private,
in exchange for volunteer work clients donate to the nonprofit or charity of their choice:
A nonprofit alternative to the loss of client privacy and control
experienced at public clinics and under managed care.**

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