



MINDS ON THE EDGE: Facing Mental Illness

Moderator and Panelists

Frank Sesno, Moderator

Frank Sesno, a professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, is an Emmy-award winning journalist with more than 25 years of experience, including 18 years at CNN where he was a reporter and analyst for the network on a wide range of issues.

Prior to moderating *MINDS ON THE EDGE*, Sesno worked with the Fred Friendly Seminars as moderator of *FUELING OUR FUTURE*, a broadcast project for public television that was taped at the Blue Planet Summit on Environmental Issues. He has also been a panelist on several Fred Friendly Seminars, gaining a unique perspective on the experience of participating in a hypothetical scenario.

During his tenure at CNN, where he serves as a special correspondent, Sesno served as CNN's White House correspondent, Washington, D.C. bureau chief, and hosted the program "Late Edition with Frank Sesno." Before joining CNN in 1984, Sesno was a radio correspondent at the White House and in London for the Associated Press.

Currently, Sesno is host and managing editor of the innovative PBS series Planet Forward.

Stephen G. Breyer

Supreme Court Justice Breyer has participated in five Fred Friendly Seminars, probing the legal underpinnings of challenging ethical issues and exploring the legal ramifications of policy positions.

President Clinton appointed Breyer to the U. S. Supreme Court in 1994 following a distinguished career as a judge. From 1980 to 1990, Breyer was a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, and he was its chief judge from 1990 to 1994. He also served as a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States from 1990 to 1994, and was a member of the United States Sentencing Commission from 1985 to 1989.

Breyer served as a law clerk to Justice Arthur Goldberg of the Supreme Court of the United States during the 1964 term after graduating from Harvard law School. He continued his law career in Washington as a special assistant to the Assistant U.S. Attorney General for Antitrust from 1965 to 1967.

In 1973, Breyer was the Assistant Special Prosecutor of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force. He served as special counsel of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee from 1974 to 1975, and as chief counsel of the committee in 1979 and 1980.

Justice Breyer taught law at Harvard Law School at different points throughout his career from 1967 to 1994. He has also been a professor at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government and taught at the College of Law in Sydney, Australia and at the University of Rome.

Arthur Caplan, Ph.D.

Dr. Arthur Caplan is a bioethicist who has written extensively on forced, mandated, or coerced treatment of the mentally ill.

He is the Emanuel and Robert Hart Professor of Bioethics, chair of the Department of Medical Ethics, and director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Dr. Caplan is also the primary investigator for the Scattergood Program for the Applied Ethics of Behavioral Health, housed at the Center for Bioethics, which is dedicated to examining the ethical dimensions of behavioral healthcare.

The author or editor of twenty-five books, including *Smart Mice Not So Smart People*, as well as over 500 papers in journals of medicine, science, philosophy, and health policy, Dr. Caplan contributed an article titled “[Mind Reading](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=mind_reading)” (http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=mind_reading) for *The American Prospect*’s special report “The Politics of Mental Illness.” This collection of articles by leading scholars in the field examines different aspects of mental illnesses and their implications for public policy.

Additionally, Dr. Caplan serves on the National Institutes of Mental Health special advisory panel on human experimentation on vulnerable subjects. He is a fellow of the Hastings Center, the NY Academy of Medicine, the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Pete Earley

During Pete Earley’s difficult struggle to secure treatment and care for a son diagnosed with bipolar disorder, the author and former *Washington Post* reporter became interested in the nation’s mental health system and wrote a book about the subject.

In *Crazy: A Father’s Search Through America’s Mental Health Madness*, which was one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction, Earley tells two stories that are threaded through the book. The first is his family’s personal story, and describes how his son developed mental illness while in college and was arrested during a manic

episode. This began a chain of events that was a shocking and emotional journey for the entire family, and provided a revealing window into mental illness in America.

The second story line in *Crazy* follows Pete Earley as he spends a year investigating the circumstances and treatment of people with mental illness in Miami-Dade County in Florida. Earley reports on how the criminal justice system is flooded with people with mental illness. They are arrested by police with scant training in dealing with mental illness, they burden the court system as it tries to adhere to a legal process ill-suited to the circumstances, and they languish in prison where they receive no treatment. Generally they are released again with no support or prospect of integrating back into society.

Since the publication of *Crazy*, Earley has traveled across the country advocating the need to reform the mental health system and stop the imprisonment of people with mentally illness. In addition to *Crazy*, he has published ten books, including *The Hot House: Life Inside Leavenworth Prison*.

Frederick J. Frese III, Ph.D.

Dr. Fred Frese has led a distinguished career in public mental health care for the past thirty years, as a leader in the field of psychology and a well-known advocate for the rights of people with mental illness.

An officer in Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, Fred Frese was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Despite this condition and numerous involuntary hospitalizations in state, private, and military psychiatric wards, he pursued a medical degree and earned a doctorate in psychology from Ohio University. Dr. Frese embarked on a successful career in mental health and became director of psychology at Western Reserve Psychiatric Hospital.

After years of keeping his experiences with schizophrenia a secret, Dr. Frese decided to reveal his condition publicly in 1990. Over almost thirty years he has spoken at hundreds of conferences and public events in an effort to combat stigma and call for recognition of the dignity of people with mental illness and their right to services and support.

Currently Dr. Frese holds clinical faculty appointments in psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University and at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. He is coordinator of the Summit County Recovery Project, which serves recovering consumers in the Akron area. Dr. Frese also publishes and lectures widely on the subject of schizophrenia and is on the board of scientific advisors for *Schizophrenia Bulletin*.

Dr. Frese founded the Community and State Hospital Section of the American Psychological Association, and is past president of the National Mental Health Consumers' Association. He has been actively involved with NAMI and serves on their national board of directors.

Avel Gordly

Underlying Avel Gordly's many years of professional advocacy for culturally-specific mental health treatment are her personal and familial experiences with mental illness.

While Gordly was serving in Oregon's state legislature, her son Tyrone was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He had served in the first Gulf War, and his illness began following his return.

As she struggled to help Tyrone find treatment and support, she discovered that his diagnosis and treatment was repeatedly biased by racial stereotypes.

In 1991 Gordly had been elected to the Oregon House of Representatives. She was elected to the Oregon Senate in 1996, where she served until this year. During her tenure in state government she was actively engaged in mental health policy.

She is a founder of the African American Mental Health Commission, and her advocacy work is celebrated with the Avel Gordly Center for Healing, a multicultural, adult outpatient treatment clinic at Oregon Health & Science University that opened in 2008.

Gordly is now associate professor in the Department of Black Studies at Portland State University, and she is writing a book on her own experiences with depression.

Eric R. Kandel, M.D.

Dr. Eric Kandel is a neuroscientist who won the Nobel Prize in 2000 for his work in the physiology of memory. His seminal research in biochemistry and biophysics over five decades has advanced scientific understanding of the relationship between the mind and the brain.

Dr. Kandel graduated from Harvard University and earned a medical degree at the NYU School of Medicine. He began his research career at the National Institute of Mental Health, where he studied mammalian brain neurophysiology. Upon finishing a residency in clinical psychiatry, he joined the staff of the Massachusetts Mental Health Center in Boston, while continuing to conduct research and teach at Harvard Medical School. He became professor of physiology and psychiatry at NYU in 1965.

In 1974, Dr. Kandel moved to Columbia University where he founded the Center for Neurobiology and Behavior. He is a professor of biochemistry and biophysics on the faculty of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Throughout his rich career, Dr. Kandel has maintained an active interest in clinical psychiatry, particularly in fostering the interchange of ideas across diverse disciplines.

Along with the Nobel Prize, Dr. Kandel is the recipient of many honors including the Lasker Award, the Gairdner Award, the Harvey Prize, and the National Medal of Science.

He has chronicled his remarkable career in his autobiography *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind*.

Judge Steven Leifman

Judge Steven Leifman is at the forefront of a public policy movement in the criminal justice system to reduce the number of people with mentally illness in prison, and to develop alternative approaches that offer treatment and support for recovery.

Judge Leifman serves as Associate Administrative Judge in the Miami-Dade County Court Criminal Division and Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health for the Supreme Court of Florida.

In Florida, he has been passionate and tireless change agent. Judge Leifman oversaw the groundbreaking report *Transforming Florida's Mental Health System*, which was prepared by the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, and he is chairman of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida's Mental Health Committee. He is co-chair of the Miami-Dade County Mayor's Mental Health Task Force and he serves on a statewide task force with Governor Crist and state legislators to improve Florida's mental health system.

Judge Leifman is providing leadership on this issue nationally. He is co-chair of the Council of State Governments/ TAPA Center for Jail Diversion Judges' Criminal Justice/ Mental Health Leadership Initiative, and member of the National Leadership Forum for Behavioral Health.

Estelle Richman

Estelle Richman is a nationally recognized expert on issues of behavioral health and children's services. Serving as Secretary of Public Welfare for the state of Pennsylvania, Richman has insisted that the department's policies be focused on helping people reach their fullest potential and breaking down barriers to services for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens.

Richman's career spans more than 30 years of public service. Prior to her appointment by Gov. Rendell on Jan. 12, 2003, Richman served as the first female managing director of the City of Philadelphia.

She also previously held numerous leading positions in Philadelphia's human services operations. Prior to her appointment as Managing Director, Ms. Richman served as Director of Social Services for the City of Philadelphia. Other positions she has held include the City of Philadelphia's Commissioner of Public Health and Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services; and Assistant Director with the Positive Education Program (PEP) in Cleveland, Ohio, a day treatment program for children with behavior problems.

Elyn Saks

A professor of law, Elyn Saks examines the ethical dimensions of psychiatric research and forced treatment of the mentally ill. This is an issue she is both personally and professionally invested in, having experienced both forced treatment and restraint.

Saks had sporadic symptoms of schizophrenia that were undiagnosed during high school, and then her mental illness escalated during college. In graduate school at

Oxford in England she suffered a full-blown psychotic episode. Medication and therapy got the illness under control, but it erupted again some years later as she studied law at Yale. Admitted to the hospital in New Haven, she was force-fed drugs and strapped to gurneys.

With therapy and pharmaceuticals, Saks manages her schizophrenia. Despite the difficulties of living with mental illness, she has become a distinguished legal scholar.

Associate dean at University of Southern California's Gould School of Law, Saks specializes in mental health law, criminal law, and children and the law. She is the author of *Refusing Care: Forced Treatment and the Rights of the Mentally Ill*, *Interpreting Interpretation: The Limits of Hermeneutic Psychoanalysis*, and *Jekyll on Trial: Multiple Personality Disorder and Criminal Law*.

She is an affiliate member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, a board member of Mental Health Advocacy Services, and a member of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Foundation.

In 2007, Saks published *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness*, an autobiography about her struggles with schizophrenia and acute psychosis and her success in managing her condition. Oliver Sacks describes it as "The most lucid and hopeful memoir of living with schizophrenia I have ever read."

Thomas A. Simpatico, M.D.

Dr. Simpatico is an expert in health care delivery systems, the intersection of psychiatry and the law, and public policy relating to persons with serious mental illness.

Since 2004, Dr. Simpatico has been professor of psychiatry and director of the Division of Public Psychiatry at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine. He serves as president of the Vermont Psychiatric Association.

He came to Vermont from Illinois, where he trained in psychiatry at the University of Chicago and began a distinguished career in psychiatry and public health. In Illinois, Dr. Simpatico was associate professor of psychiatry at Northwestern University Medical School and Metro Chicago bureau chief for the Illinois State Mental Health Authority. In that role, he created and directed a number of programs that helped to significantly integrate mental health services in Illinois.

Dr. Simpatico is an examiner for the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, and he is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association.

Tracey Skale, M.D.

Chief medical officer of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services, Dr. Tracey Skale leads an innovative mental health agency that annually serves 4,000 adults with severe mental illness and their families. With ten locations, this community-based resource is organized as a "one stop" offering services that include psychiatric care, medication, vocational and job training referral, housing assistance, family counseling and support with the goal of helping clients to achieve, maintain and increase their independence.

Dr. Skale has a special interest in treating patients with psychotic or mood disorders. She is the lead physician for the Homeless Team, which works proactively to identify mentally ill homeless in the community and engage them with services and treatment.

Dr. Skale speaks nationally on psychopharmacology, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, recognizing mental illness in primary care settings, and the importance of open access to medications.

Lauren Spiro

As a teenager, Lauren Spiro was hospitalized for over a year with a diagnosis of chronic schizophrenia. As an adult, she has worked to reform mental health treatment and educate stakeholders on the many diverse paths to wellness. She is an eloquent advocate for medical procedures and public policies that are directed by empowered consumers of mental health services.

For over 30 years, Spiro has worked in a variety of behavioral healthcare settings in positions ranging from direct service provider to senior manager. Currently, she is the director of public policy at the National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/ Survivor Organizations.

Spiro is a consultant and educator on the recovery process, peer support, systems transformation, and cultural competency. She was the founding board member of Housing Unlimited, Inc., served on CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), and is on the board of VOCAL (Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership). Spiro also serves on the Person Directed Service Planning Training Guide Project and Wellness Initiative, run by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Susan Stefan

Susan Stefan is an attorney at the forefront of the legal movement to assert the rights of the disabled and develop innovative approaches that can overcome systemic barriers to effective treatment for the mentally ill.

Currently, Stefan is a staff attorney at the Center for Public Representation in Newton, Massachusetts, where she directs the Center's Emergency Department Project. Prior to working for the Center for Public Representation, Stefan taught disability law and mental health law at the University of Miami's School of Law.

Stefan received her J.D. from Stanford Law School and her master's from Cambridge University after graduating *magna cum laude* from Princeton University. During her distinguished legal career to date, the rulings in several of her landmark cases have resulted in significant public policy changes to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. These include the removal of questions about mental health treatment on applications for bar admission and judicial nomination as well as the invalidation of a statute that provided differential access to medical and mental health records.

Stefan has written extensively on legal and policy issues involving people with psychiatric disabilities, including her most recent book *Emergency Department Treatment of People with Psychiatric Disabilities: Policy Issues and Legal Requirements*.

Sam Tsemberis, Ph.D.

Sam Tsemberis is credited with radically reducing the homeless population by developing a new approach to house the large percentage of chronically homeless people who are mentally ill.

During years reaching out to the homeless while working with street outreach teams and drop-in center programs, Dr. Tsemberis constantly encountered innumerable barriers in finding long-term housing options for this population. Housing programs for the homeless often required that people be sober, drug free and willing to start treatment. Rethinking this standard approach, Dr. Tsemberis devised a program called “Housing First” with the understanding that the priority should be to get individuals into a safe and stable home. He suggested that overcoming substance abuse and opening up to treatment for mental illness should follow, not precede, the right to housing.

In 1992, Dr. Tsemberis founded Pathways to Housing, a not-for-profit organization that has pioneered this new approach. Research-based and outcome-oriented, Pathways to Housing has been proven both more effective and significantly less expensive than traditional models. It is now being replicated around the country.

Dr. Tsemberis has been the principal investigator for several federally funded studies of homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse. He has also published widely on the topic of homelessness among people with multiple disabilities.

Executive Director of Pathways to Housing, Dr. Tsemberis is also on the Department of Psychiatry faculty at the New York University Langone Medical Center.