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Mental Health in Historical Perspective

Popular Science : Popular Science in History

Coleborne, Catharine

Why Talk About Madness?

Bringing History into the Conversation

- **Opens up new discussions about the value of historical perspectives on mental health to contemporary research and policy**
- **Argues that we must engage with and make public historical narratives of madness in order to understand institutional mental healthcare today**
- **Draws on transnational case studies from the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand**

This short book argues for the relevance of historical perspectives on mental health, exploring how these histories can and should inform debates about mental healthcare today. Why is it important to study the history of madness? What does it mean to voice these histories? What can these tell us about the challenges and legacies of mental health care across the world today? Offering an intervention into new ways of thinking – and talking – about ‘mad’ history, Catharine Coleborne explores the social and cultural impact of the history of the mad movement, self-help and mental health consumer advocacy from the 1960s inside a longer tradition of ‘writing madness’. Starting with a brief history of the relevance of first-person accounts, then looking at the significance of other ways of representing the psychiatric ‘patient’, ‘survivor’ or ‘consumer’ over time, this book aims to escape from dominant modes of writing about the asylum.

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