

Booklist

Mad in America, Robert Whitaker: the author presents a fairly comprehensive review of the history of treatment for mental illness, and examines and questions the efficacy, safety, and ethics of the development of psychiatric interventions for severe mental illness, especially antipsychotics. His book impacted psychiatrists significantly when published.

An Unquiet Mind, Kay Redfield Jamison: an international authority on manic-depressive (Bi-polar) illness and one of the few women who are full professors of medicine at American universities. It is her remarkable personal testimony: the revelation of her own struggle since adolescence with symptoms and how it has shaped her life. Also how Jamison finally made peace with needing to use medication to manage her life and health.

Girl Interrupted, Susanna Kaysen: a memoir published in 1993 by Kaysen, relating her experiences as a young woman hospitalized at Massachusetts' McLean Hospital in 1960 after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. It is written in short chapters that give the reader a sense of what it was like inside of a psychiatric unit for months during that era. The book is better than the Hollywoodized movie.

A Bright Red Scream, Marilee Strong: written by an American journalist about self harm/ self inflicted violence (SIV) and the dynamics that appear to lie beneath. It is well researched and written and considered illuminating and compassionate by professional reviewers. It was criticized for neglecting the fact that nearly 50% of self-mutilating individuals do not report trauma histories. You will walk away with a much better understanding of why some persons use SIV.

Eden Express, A Memoir of Insanity, Mark Vonnegut: a 1975 recounting by the son of Kurt Vonnegut about his experiences in the late 1960s and his major psychotic breakdown and recovery. The writing leads the reader to experience the increasingly disorganized and bizarre thinking of a decline into psychiatric crisis. You may need to shake your head clear when you put it down.

Brain On Fire, My Month of Madness, Susannah Cahalan: in 2009 Susannah Cahalan was a healthy 24 year old reporter for the New York Post when she began to experience numbness, paranoia, sensitivity to light and erratic behavior, and eventually hallucinations, psychotic behavior and even catatonia. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and treated as such. With significant advocacy by family she was eventually diagnosed and treated for a rare autoimmune disease that can attack the brain. Appropriate treatment resulted in her full recovery. A daunting consideration that it could be any one of us.

Mind On Fire: A Memoir of Madness and Recovery, Arnold Fanning: Fanning conveys the consciousness of a person living with mania, psychosis, and severe depression with a startling precision and intimacy. A gripping, sometimes harrowing, and ultimately uplifting testament of a person who has visited hellish regions of the mind.

The Broken Cord, Michael Dorris: the story of Dorris' adopted son Adam, born with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) that explores the enormous scope of the disease, the profound way that FAS affects judgement and behavior, and explores one father's endless battle to help his family overcome the problem. 1989

The Anatomy of an Epidemic, Robert Whitaker: published in 2010 where Whitaker asks why the number of Americans who receive government disability for mental illness approximately doubled since 1987 and the intensive influence of pharmaceutical companies in mental health treatment.

ANY BOOKS by Oliver Sacks!! Sacks is a well known British neurologist and prolific writer of books about the brain and the way that deficits manifest in behavior, altered perceptions, extraordinary qualities related to brain function. He was played by Robin Williams in the movie *Awakenings* (that was made based on the book of the same title with Dr Sacks providing production assistance and consultation) You can find many videos of him on Youtube, TED talks, and do listen to the Terri Gross interview of Sacks during her Fresh Air broadcast. remembrance of him – National Public Radio 8/31/15. A spectacular patient story you will never forget.

The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath: a semi autobiographical novel that parallels Plath's descent into mental illness and hospitalizations in Boston, and her experiences with symptoms that may have been clinical depression or bipolar II disorder. Published in 1967.

The Memory Palace, A Memoir, Mira Bartok: this book recounts the years of struggle by Mira and her sister to live with, and then hide from, their severely schizophrenic mother in order to continue lives of their own. The memoir moves between the present crisis of their reconciliation as their mother is dying, and the many past episodes of meaningful and painful memories. The story also recounts the ways that Mira's life is changed by a traumatic brain injury after a motor vehicle accident while managing the years of difficulty with her mother.

The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic, Darby Penney: after 126 years of operation a psychiatric hospital in upstate New York was closed in 1995. It had been home to over 54,000 people, many of whom died there. Penney is a poet and national leader in the human rights movement for people with psychiatric disabilities who acquired access to the suitcases and belongings left behind. Penney's book tells the story of twelve persons whose suitcases she could match to their hospital records, and the photos of the belongings of these persons are profound.