



Welcome to Alternative Mental Health news! Check out the latest research and events. Many thanks to Craig Wagner, author of [Choices in Recovery](#), for curating newsletter content.

Dan Stradford, Senior Editor

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## Biomedical Research

**Ibogaine effective for substance abuse?** Ibogaine is a psychoactive substance derived from root bark of the West African shrub *Tabernaemontana iboga*. It is purported to be an effective drug dependence treatment, but its efficacy has been hard to evaluate, partly because it is illegal in some countries. A [retrospective analysis](#) in Brazil of 75 previous alcohol, cannabis, cocaine and crack users found 61% achieved abstinence (a single ibogaine treatment resulted in 5.5 months of abstinence, multiple treatments resulted in 8.4 months on average). These results suggest that the physician-supervised ibogaine use accompanied by psychotherapy can facilitate prolonged periods of abstinence without serious adverse effects.

**Antibiotic use correlated with mental health diagnosis.** Because antibiotics kill bacteria and can disrupt the gut microbiome, researchers studied records of antibiotic use by psychiatric patients compared to controls. 1.3% of controls were on antibiotics, but psychiatric patients were much more likely to be taking them: 2.9% for major depression, 3% for schizophrenia, 4% for bipolar depression and 7.7% for mania. The [study](#) "suggests that if we can prevent infections and minimize antibiotic treatment in people with mental illness, then we might be able to prevent the occurrence of manic episodes," says Robert Yolken, MD, lead researcher.

## Psychosocial Research

**The psychiatry / psychology divide?** A new [study](#) suggests that psychiatrists and psychologists are clustered at opposite ends of a biological-psychosocial continuum and that these differences inform many aspects of their respective theory and practice. Not surprisingly, "trainee clinical psychologists favor psychosocial over biological understandings of mental disorders... while psychiatry trainees were most likely to endorse statements based on biological concepts like biological markers and the effects of biological interventions..." The multi-disciplinary nature of Integrative Psychiatry and the growth of mental health practices that integrate biomedical and psychosocial perspectives may be an effective means to bridge this divide.

**Behavioral Activation (BA): as good as CBT and easier/cheaper.** Behavioural activation is an 'outside in' treatment that focuses on helping people with depression change the way they act, helping them link behavior to mood. In contrast, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an 'inside out' treatment where therapists focus on the way a person thinks. A [study](#) of 440 depressed people found BA as effective as CBT - both resulting in 2/3 of participants reporting at least a 50%

reduction in depressive symptoms - but BA costs 20% less and is deliverable by non-specialist mental health staff.

## Wellness Research

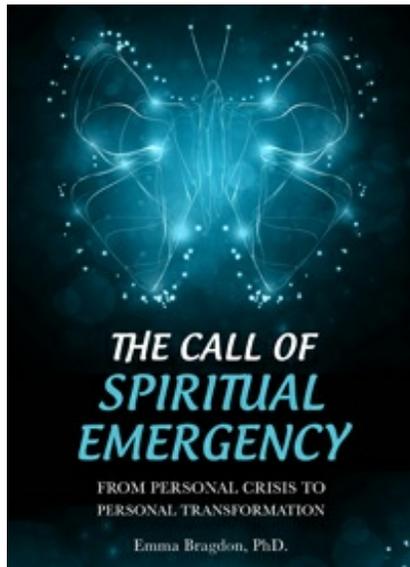
**Environmental toxins and brain development.** In a [consensus statement](#), 48 leading scientific and medical experts call for an immediate and significant reduction in exposures to toxic chemicals that interfere with fetal and children's brain development. Available evidence suggests that they can contribute to autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and other disabilities. Primary toxins include organophosphate pesticides, certain flame retardants, combustion-related air pollutants, lead, mercury and PCBs. The group seeks to overhaul the U.S. approach to developing and assessing evidence on chemicals of concern for brain development.

**BPA plastics and boys with ADHD.** A [study](#) of blood samples of 460 children revealed a 5X higher prevalence of ADHD among children with urinary BPA concentrations above the median as compared to those below. Sex-stratified results found clear distinctions: above median boys were 11X more likely to have an ADHD diagnosis while above median girls had only slightly higher frequency of an ADHD diagnosis.

**Eating fruit and mood.** A [study](#) of over 12,000 Australians found that happiness benefits were detected for each extra daily portion of fruit and vegetables up to 8 portions per day. The people who changed from almost no fruit and veg to eight portions of fruit and veg a day experienced an increase in life satisfaction equivalent to moving from unemployment to employment. The well-being improvements occurred within 24 months. This is important in light of the poor diets in the [U.S.](#) and [Europe](#).

**Gut transit time and gut health.** Maintaining a variety of gut bacterial flora is only one consideration in gut health - an important influencer of mental health. A [study](#) found an additional consideration: the longer food takes to pass through the colon, the more harmful bacterial byproducts are produced. Conversely, when transit time is shorter, a higher amount of the substances are produced associated with renewal of the colon's inner surface. These results emphasize the importance of preventing constipation (slow transit time), a risk factor for ADHD and autism. Gut transit time is sped up by eating fiber, drinking water and limiting red meat consumption.

## Books & Web information



What distinguishes psychopathology from religious, spiritual and transpersonal experiences? This is more than an academic question since [41% of Americans](#) claim to have had a religious experience that has changed the direction of their life - experiences that have much in common with psychosis.

Emma Bragdon PhD is a recognized leader in the field of spiritual emergence and emergency - a diagnostic category first included in version 4 of the DSM. Bragdon has written 7 books on the subject, is founder of an integrative mental health training company ([www.IMHU.org](http://www.IMHU.org)), and gives yearly [practitioner trips to Brazil](#) (next one Nov 13-20, 2016) to see first hand Spiritist psychiatric hospitals that combine the best of Western mental health care with spiritual healing.

Shawn Tassone, MD, PhD, took the trip and noted,

*"...I arrived in Brazil a physician full of questions armed with experiences in integrative medicine, but was a novice with the spiritual aspect of healing. My time with Emma Bragdon, immersed in Spiritism... has changed my spiritual paradigm, and has shown me the path from physician to healer. The personal shift is undeniable - the outward expression of this shifting unfathomable."*

Bragdon's book, [The Call of Spiritual Emergency](#) shares specifics of the phenomena of spiritual awakening. The book offers compelling stories of those who tell about their unusual experiences. And perhaps more important to practitioners, it provides insight on how to recognize and care for someone in spiritual emergency. Producers of the film, [CrazyWise](#) interviewed Emma Bragdon and documented her trip for health providers visiting Brazil (click [here](#) for interview).

## Conferences & Events

- **Sept 8-11** - "Re-examing the Oath: Reversing Nutrient Deficiency and Iatrogenic Toxicity." Sponsored by the International College of Integrative Medicine, aka ICIM. [More](#).
- **Sept 15** - 14th Annual International Restorative Medicine Conference. Hilton Head, SC. [More](#).
- **Sept 16-18** - 14th Annual International Restorative Medicine Conference. Hilton Head, [More](#)
- **Sept 29- Oct 2** - 7th annual Integrative Medicine for Mental Health (IMMH) Conference. Washington DC. [More](#)
- **Oct 6-9** - IPS Mental Health Services Conference. Washington DC. [More](#)
- **Oct 14-16** - Psychiatry MasterClass: Intensive Clinical Training in Integrative Psychiatry. Denver, CO. [More](#)
- **Oct 15-18** - Mastering Brain Chemistry Physician Education Workshop (covering all major mental health diagnoses). Walsh Research Institute, with William Walsh PhD, Mary Megson MD, and Malcom Sickels MD, Oak Brook, IL. [More](#). [Email](#). 630-299-4466.
- **Oct 28-30** - International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis (ISPS), US 15th Annual Meeting, Boston, MA. [More](#).
- **Oct 30** - AIHM Annual Conference. San Diego, CA. [More](#).
- **Nov 5** - Nutrient Resolution: Breaking the Cycle of Stress and Chronic Inflammation - a CAM Conference with BANT (British Associ. for Applied Nutrition and Nutritional Therapy), [More](#).

## Staff



### Dan Stradford, President/Founder, Safe Harbor.

Dan is the lead author of a book for physicians, [Complementary and Alternative Medicine Treatments in Psychiatry](#), and the author of the book, [The Men's Code of Honor: 66 Principles That Make a Man](#).

He has published over 250 articles and technical papers. His writings and commentary have appeared in *Time Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Daily Record* (Scotland), the college textbook *Social Problems* and many other publications.



### Craig Wagner, Editor.

Craig is an author, speaker, educator and freelance editor in the field of Integrative Mental Health. He is a trainer for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and editor of *Codex Alternus*, the most comprehensive practitioner reference on alternative therapies.

His book, [Choices in Recovery](#), is the first to extract the full range of non-drug mental health therapies from the bowels of scientific research and transform it into a pragmatic recovery tool for those with mental health issues and their supporters. He writes and curates this newsletter. See [www.OnwardMentalHealth.com](http://www.OnwardMentalHealth.com).