

Dear Mr. Jimenez,

I'm writing to request mercy for Brian Henley, who is currently being forcibly subjected to shock "treatment" and drugging by the UF Health Shands Hospital System. Brian is not a danger to himself or others, and he does not consent to treatment; in fact, he has been working with Mind Freedom International to request freedom from these dangerous and unwanted medical treatments for about a decade now. I hope I can appeal to your conscience so that Mr. Henley can finally heal from the iatrogenic harms and trauma he's suffered at the hands of the medical system in peace.

The myth that people labeled with mental disabilities are incapable of knowing or stating what helps or hurts them is just that: a myth. Human beings can recognize and communicate when they are being hurt from birth. I hope you can recognize this universal human truth, and thus view coercive "treatment" (locked facilities, forcible drugging and shocking, congregate living arrangements, etc.) in a freshly unfavorable light. Indeed, the very presence of coercion is proof that disabled people know they are being harmed! Patients try to escape institutional facilities because they are being harmed. Patients stop taking medications that make them feel worse instead of better. The psychiatric survivors' movement is asking you to please stop because we have no wish to see others hurt as we were. I hope I can inspire you to champion compassionate alternatives to replace force and coercion; there is nothing good about piling more hurt upon the people who are already suffering most in society.

In recognition of our shared humanity, please consider advocating for change:

1. **Replace the *DSM* with the *Power Threat Meaning Framework*.** The *Power Threat Meaning Framework* represents the perspective that human distress is primarily caused by societal power imbalances, leaving room for the possibility of healing and encouraging modes of treatment that remediate harmful power imbalances instead of exacerbating them. (The *DSM*, in contrast, often labels patients with lifelong disabilities that are not particularly evidence-based; even NIMH has moved away from using the *DSM* due to the "lack of validity" of such labels.)
2. **Replace locked facilities and treatment by force with respite houses and informed consent.** I'd encourage you to listen to psychiatric survivors when we say you've hurt us, and examine the work of Dr. Loren Mosher (and the contemporary inheritors of his wisdom, peer respite houses) to navigate a better path forward. We have every reason to believe respite houses will support better outcomes and be more cost-effective and efficient than the treatment-by-force model.
3. **Replace congregate living facilities with community alternatives.** Mr. Henley would prefer to live in subsidized housing within the community where he can engage with his support system. He does not wish to be institutionalized in a congregate living facility, where patients are forced to learn helplessness and are all too often subjected to abuse and/or dangerous living conditions by the people profiting from their "care." The lack of feedback survey data from patients in such facilities speaks for itself: people are being silenced.

I hope you can recognize the wrongness of the current mental health system in general, and Mr. Henley's situation especially. Mr. Henley was first forced into a congregate living facility due to self-harm – why one would react to someone who has been so stripped of choices in life that they would resort to self-harm by revoking what little self-determination they have left, I cannot understand – and now he is being punished for attempting to escape via incarceration in a locked facility and shock "treatments" three times a week. Please, don't be a party to this retaliatory behavior. As a Christian person, I'm concerned for your heart and conscience as well as for Mr. Henley's suffering.

Though I don't know whether you share my faith, I appreciate you reading and considering my suggestions, and leave you with a word of both caution and inspiration from Matthew 25:40: *And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."*

Sincerely,

Meaghan Graef
Psychiatric Survivor
Phoenix, AZ

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