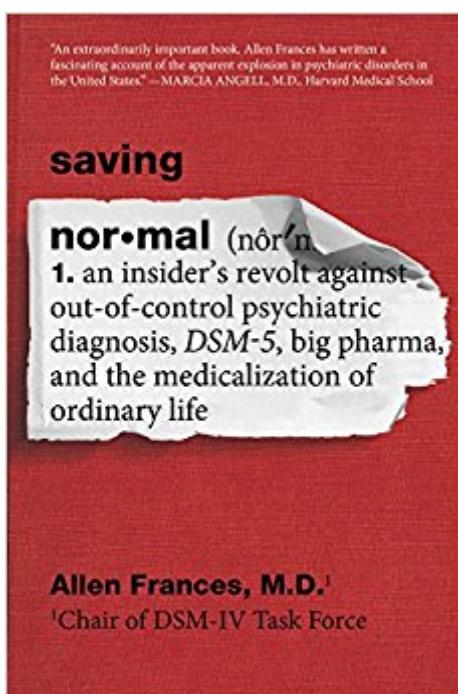


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# Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt Against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, And The Medicalization Of Ordinary Life



## **Synopsis**

International BestsellerA deeply fascinating and urgently important critique of the widespread medicalization of normalityAnyone living a full, rich life experiences ups and downs, stresses, disappointments, sorrows, and setbacks. Today, however, millions of people who are really no more than "worried well" are being diagnosed as having a mental disorder and receiving unnecessary treatment. In Saving Normal, Allen Frances, one of the world's most influential psychiatrists, explains why stigmatizing a healthy person as mentally ill leads to unnecessary, harmful medications, the narrowing of horizons, the misallocation of medical resources, and the draining of the budgets of families and the nation. We also shift responsibility for our mental well-being away from our own naturally resilient brains and into the hands of "Big Pharma," who are reaping multi-billion-dollar profits. Frances cautions that the newest edition of the "bible of psychiatry," the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (DSM-5), is turning our current diagnostic inflation into hyperinflation by converting millions of "normal" people into "mental patients." Saving Normal is a call to all of us to reclaim the full measure of our humanity.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; 1 Reprint edition (August 12, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062229265

ISBN-13: 978-0062229267

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 132 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #10,675 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Mental Illness #35 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Psychiatry #51 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Pathologies

## **Customer Reviews**

\*Starred Review\* The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), produced by the American Psychiatric Association, is considered the bible of psychiatry. It establishes the border between normalcy and mental disorder. Despite its usefulness, one prominent psychiatrist laments that the DSM has become too influential. The definition of normal seems to be steadily shrinking. Frances

served as head of the task force that issued the fourth DSM. He worries that the new DSM-5 (which cost \$25 million to produce) will further inflate psychiatric diagnosis, resulting in additional overmedication. Already, 20 percent of American adults take one drug or more for a psychiatric condition. About 11 percent of adults used antidepressants in 2010. And prescriptions for antipsychotic medicines have doubled in a decade. Frances frets that the DSM-5 will spawn faddish diagnoses—much like its predecessor, which created false epidemics of attention deficit, autism, and childhood bipolar disorder. This time around, look out for Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, which morphs temper tantrums into a mental illness, and Minor Neurocognitive Disorder, which turns the forgetfulness of aging into a mental disorder. With A Solomon-like wisdom, Frances justly doles out blame and offers reasonable remedies. His decree: don't medicalize human difference; celebrate it. --Tony Miksanek --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“Frances delves deeply into the history of mental illness, makes his arguments crisply, and has good personal stories to tell. He is articulate and learned. ... He is in favor of not medicating, and thus muffling, all the offbeat pain and beauty out of existence. ... [A] piece of intellectual skywriting. (Dwight Garner, *New York Times*)“An extraordinarily candid and important book. Allen Frances has written a fascinating account of the apparent explosion in psychiatric disorders in the United States. (MARCIA ANGELL, M. D., Senior Lecturer in Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and former Editor-in-Chief, *New England Journal of Medicine*)“Saving Normal is a riveting and important book, written with great flair and precise passion. This is a book every psychiatrist, every general practitioner, every student swallowing meds--in fact everyone--needs to read. (Dr. LISA APPIGNANESI, Chair of the Freud Museum, London, and author of *Mad, Bad and Sad*)“Frances is largely credited with spearheading the anti-DSM-5 efforts. (CNN.com)“Saving Normal is a clear, convincing, and essential discussion of the twin epidemics facing modern psychiatry: under-treatment of the truly ill and overtreatment of the basically well. It holds immense potential to improve patients’ lives. (JOSH BAZELL, M.D., New York Times bestselling author of *Beat the Reaper: A Novel*)“Few are as well-equipped as Frances to map the dynamic field of psychiatry, and his rendering of its shifting contours is timely, crucial, and insightful--as are his solutions for navigating it. (Publishers Weekly)“With Solomon-like wisdom, Frances justly doles out blame and offers reasonable remedies. His decree: don't medicalize human difference; celebrate it. (Booklist (starred review))“A valuable

assessment. ... A no-holds-barred critique. (Kirkus Reviews) "An indispensable guide for professional and lay readers" (Library Journal) "Allen Frances' book is fascinating. ... Entertaining. (Metapsychology) "Authoritative. ... Valuable. ... This is a detailed, nicely constructed account by a highly qualified and well-connected psychiatrist with intimate knowledge of the process. The book is clearly written and surprisingly easy reading. (The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists)

Common sense and psychiatry seem an oxymoron though this book addresses some of the hijinx of a field prostituted to the Insurance companies. I worked in the mental health field for many years and found the labeling of human spirit and soul searchers a task worthy only of those who are responsible with their "forecasting". Self-fulfilling prophecies can be damaging if not life altering. This author raises questions and creates thought provoking suggestions as to how we might rely less on labeling for the sake of payment, and more on common sense and creative planning for wellness.

Great book on the deception and fallacies of the psychological world and their victims

As a mental health professional, I found Dr. Allen's discussions to be rigorously researched and based on the confluence of science, marketing and reality. It is easy for doctors to over-prescribe in order to find solutions for clients who are suffering and who have been convinced by advertising that medication equals recovery. The author presents the vast considerations that every provider and patient must entertain before launching into a drug regimen. I also appreciate his willingness to assume personal responsibility for the decisions he made over the course of his career that he might reconsider based on additional knowledge and experience.

Perfect book for my studies in sociology and psychology. Definitely a great read!

All of us critically concerned about DSM-5 are going to have to continue to sort the sound criticism from the mere critical sound. I think this one passes the test: knowledgeable from the inside, sane, and tough enough to have a bite.

A wonderful book, but much too late. Grace E Jackson, MD (Board Certified Psychiatrist) wrote these warnings and truths in *Rethinking Psychiatric Drugs and Drug Induced Dementia: A Perfect Crime* in 2005 and 2009.. It is reassuring to see Dr Frances speak out.

Interesting to learn about the evolution of the diagnoses of mental illnesses - and how it may have gone too far in labeling things as a mental illness that are normal - and a result of normal challenges in life.

Amazing, and stunningly eye opening considering how well he describes the HISTORY of psychiatry in relation to culture and how we go to where we are in the United States.

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