

*The Opal Network Presents:*

# Mental Disorder, or Mental Difference: Who Decides, and In What Ways Does It Matter?



How should we be distinguishing between what is a “mental disorder,” and what is simply a “mental difference” which may cause problems at some point but which a person can learn to live with successfully and even value as part of his or her individuality?

- Who should be allowed to decide what is really a “disorder,” and what is just a difference?
- What are the consequences of viewing experiences such as extreme mood swings, hearing voices, having really different frames on “reality,” and various ways of being neurologically atypical, as “just differences” rather than as mental disorders?
- What effect has it had on members of our community when their differences were seen as signs of pathology? Or, have people had experiences where they really did need help, but those around them failed to see or acknowledge that something was wrong or that help was needed?

The March meeting of the Opal Network will explore these difficult questions by hearing from people with lived experience of these issues, both personally and/or as family members and as professional helpers. We will also watch videos that challenge us to think in new ways about those issues, and have a wide open community discussion in which you will have a chance to express your view!

Please come and join us! Drinks and snacks will be provided.

**Where:** Eugene Public Library - Tykeson Room

**Date:** Tuesday 3/31/15

**Time:** 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

The Opal Network is a Lane County coalition of mental health consumers, survivors, family members, providers and others working to better understand mental health issues while supporting the voice, empowerment and self-determination of users of mental health services.

**Mental health consumers and psychiatric survivors are especially invited to speak out!**

Sign language with  
72 hours notice. Wheelchair accessible.

More info: 541-607-7020  
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