



# Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness

*Christopher Lane*

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In the 1970s, a small group of leading psychiatrists met behind closed doors and literally rewrote the book on their profession. Revising and greatly expanding the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM* for short), they turned what had been a thin, spiral-bound handbook into a hefty tome. Almost overnight the number of diagnoses exploded. The result was a windfall for the pharmaceutical industry and a massive conflict of interest for psychiatry at large. *Shyness* is the first behind-the-scenes account of what really happened and why.

With unprecedented access to the American Psychiatric Association archives and previously classified memos from drug company executives, Christopher Lane unearths the disturbing truth: with little scientific justification and sometimes hilariously improbable rationales, hundreds of conditions--among them shyness--are now defined as psychiatric disorders and considered treatable with drugs. Lane shows how long-standing disagreements within the profession set the stage for these changes, and he assesses who has gained and what's been lost in the process of medicalizing emotions. With dry wit, he demolishes the façade of objective research behind which the revolution in psychiatry has hidden. He finds a profession riddled with backbiting and jockeying, and even more troubling, a profession increasingly beholden to its corporate sponsors.



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