

Lisa Loomer's Critically Acclaimed Play Highlights Akathisia and Prescribed Harm

Medication-Induced Akathisia Can Cause Suicidality

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- A powerful new play by award-winning playwright Lisa Loomer is earning praise at the Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) for its bold exploration of akathisia and the often-overlooked risks of medication-induced suicidality. Titled "[Side Effects May Include...](#)," the production arrives at a pivotal moment in public health—echoing the mission of the Medication-Induced Suicide Prevention and Education Foundation in Memory of Stewart Dolin ([MISSD](#)).



**Akathisia awareness saves lives.
Learn more at [MISSD.co](#).**

Inspired by her son's devastating experience, Loomer shines a spotlight on adverse drug effects that are frequently misdiagnosed or mistreated. Through art, she raises awareness and sparks urgently needed conversations—posing broader questions about whether our healthcare system increasingly relies on medication as a shortcut rather than providing therapeutic care.

“

Akathisia is like being burned alive in a locked coffin or a scream you can't escape.”

Side Effects May Include...

"Loomer's play captures a reality that too many families know all too well," said Wendy Dolin, founder of MISSD. "Akathisia is a severe, medication-induced disorder that can cause unbearable inner restlessness, agitation, and impulsive self-harm, suicide, or violence. Despite being

linked to hundreds of medications, it remains widely unrecognized—due to limited clinical training, a lack of honest risk disclosure, and the influence of pharmaceutical interests." MISSD was proud to be recognized as a resource for the production, and Loomer previously shared

more about their experience in an episode of MISSD's [Akathisia Stories](#) podcast.

A character in the play states, "Akathisia is like being burned alive in a locked coffin or a scream you can't escape"—a haunting description echoed by those with lived experience. The condition is often mischaracterized as restless leg syndrome or dismissed as anxiety or depression—mistakes that can have fatal consequences.

"Side Effects May Include..." continues through this weekend at Shepherd University. The play's themes align with a growing global movement to improve medication safety, ensure transparency in clinical trials, and clearly communicate the risks of prescribed drugs. Fittingly, today marks International Prescribed Harm Awareness Day, led by the UK-based charity Stephen's Voice.

"Every year, thousands suffer from akathisia and other adverse drug effects that cause psychiatric symptoms and suicidality," said Colleen Bell, spokesperson for Stephen's Voice. "Some don't survive; others suffer for years. Sharing their stories is essential to breaking the silence and preventing further harm."

MISSD provides free, accredited resources—including continuing education courses and public health videos—to help reduce avoidable suffering and save lives. The authentic, grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit accepts no funding from the pharmaceutical industry.

Kristina Kaiser

MISSD

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"Side Effects May Include..." runs through August 1 at the Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) at Shepherd University.



Today is International Prescribed Harm Awareness Day, founded by Stephen's Voice, a UK-based charity that speaks for those silenced by medication-induced suicide.

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