



Mental Disorder and Community Safety

Philip Bean

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The mentally disordered are a common sight in every large city. Some may be homeless, some may be substance users, a minority may be violent, with an even smaller number involved in high profile fatalities. Calls for greater commitment to public safety are mounting now that mental hospitals are no longer the centre of mental health services. This timely text examines the impact of demands for community safety on the integrity of mental health systems.

Mental Disorder and Community Safety confronts the vital question of how we can care for the mentally disordered when the tendency is to control, punish and regard them with increasing suspicion. Demands for higher levels of control are an understandable public response and this text seeks to explore the adequacy of existing controls and the limitations of the law as a means of solving social problems.

Using the criminal justice system as a basis for discussion, a wide range of contemporary issues are explored surrounding the treatment, rights and needs of the mentally disordered in the community. New developments such as dual diagnosis and questions concerning 'treatability' are raised. Older questions are not neglected including seeking a justification for compulsory powers and examining the position of those responsible for the patient's detention such as psychiatrists and social workers.

Too often these challenging questions and issues are avoided but this important text seeks to remedy this situation. It will be a stimulating and useful resource for all those working or training in the field.



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