

Beyond schizophrenia: living and working with a serious mental illness

Marjorie L. Baldwin

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Schizophrenia happens to some of us; however, it affects all of us...

Beyond Schizophrenia by Marjorie L. Baldwin is an excruciatingly honest revelation about personal victories and defeats in overcoming our society's failures to rehabilitate a patient with schizophrenia. Mrs. Baldwin's incredible courage in exposing her son's illness offers a diverse understanding of the misery that schizophrenia brings

into the lives of patients and their families and friends. A bold protest against discrimination of people affected by this most stigmatized condition, her book may appeal to anyone who aspires to help those craving hope and guidance on the complicated path to sanity. The book itself is designed to serve many purposes: to reduce the strong stigma against the mentally ill, to promote activism for reform in the broken mental health system, and to provide hope for the families.

While the previous few decades have held many incredible advancements in the treatment of schizophrenia, efforts to rehabilitate patients back into labor market have not caught up to the promise of new treatments. Marjorie L. Baldwin, a well-respected labor economist who specializes in labor market discrimination against the disabled, starts her book chronicling the history of the mental health system as we know it today, from the age of permanent institutionalization to the creation of effective antipsy-

chotics. She unearths many discrepancies in the delivery of the mental health system, focusing especially on abject failure of community care and prevention, as exemplified by her son's devastation.

The author's personal and professional experiences offer the reader priceless practical solutions in navigating the contradictory and labyrinthine system. Mrs. Baldwin suggests a valuable tool for rehabilitation in schizophrenia: employment. It permits a degree of confidence and independence, relieves some of the burdens upon families, and provides a new identity as normal people with normal jobs in their eyes and the eyes of society. The successful reintegration of the author's son into society gives hope to those diagnosed with schizophrenia and their long-suffering caretakers.

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