



Court of Last Resort: Mental Illness and the Law

Carol A. B. Warren

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The Court of Last Resort looks at decision making in a mental-health court and at the dilemmas of treating mental illness while protecting patients' legal rights. Carol Warren spent seven years studying hearings in a large California court where people who had been involuntarily committed to institutions for psychiatric treatment could petition for their release. In this book she confronts questions of whether mental illness is real or only a label for societal control, whether the government should be involved in committing the deviant to institutions, and how the interaction of judges, psychiatrists, families, police, and other individuals and agencies affect the court's administration of mental-health law. Though the cases in this book fall under California's Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, Warren's analysis of conflicts between legal and medical models of behavior is of national and international importance both to sociologists and to the many professionals who work at the juncture of mental health and the law.

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