



Empowering People with Severe Mental Illness: A Practical Guide

Donald M. Linhorst

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The concept of empowerment has become increasingly popular with mental health professionals. But while it is a frequently cited goal in the helping professions, empowerment is often nothing more than a buzzword that lacks specificity and grounding in real-world applications. Consequently, little practical guidance exists demonstrating how to achieve it in specific instances with specific groups of people. This book is the first professional guide that operationalizes the theory of empowerment, outlines the conditions under which it is likely to occur, and applies a practical model for working with people with severe mental illness.

In this unique and thoroughly researched volume, Donald Linhorst analyzes the conditions that facilitate empowerment and provides the framework necessary to bolster this historically powerless population's access to the material and cultural resources they need to regain control of their lives. Chapters illustrate how to foster empowerment in treatment planning, housing selection, organizational decision making, mental health service planning and policy making, employment, participation in research and evaluation, and consumer provision of mental health and support services. Case studies from a public psychiatric hospital and a community mental health agency illustrate each of the seven areas and present evidence of the model's efficacy. Finally, the book maps out the roles that service providers, administrators, policy makers, advocacy groups, researchers, and clients can play in the empowerment process.

Checklists, step-by-step instructions, historical overviews, and vivid examples make this a valuable teaching tool, planning guide, and everyday reference for mental health professionals seeking an innovative and evidence-based approach to working with their clients with severe mental illness.

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