



Illness or Deviance?: Drug Courts, Drug Treatment, and the Ambiguity of Addiction

Jennifer Murphy

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Is drug addiction a disease that can be treated, or is it a crime that should be punished? In her probing study, *Illness or Deviance?*, Jennifer Murphy investigates the various perspectives on addiction, and how society has myriad ways of handling it—incarcerating some drug users while putting others in treatment.

Illness or Deviance? highlights the confusion and contradictions about labeling addiction. Murphy's fieldwork in a drug court and an outpatient drug treatment facility yields fascinating insights, such as how courts and treatment centers both enforce the "disease" label of addiction, yet their management tactics overlap treatment with "therapeutic punishment." The "addict" label is a result not just of using drugs, but also of being a part of the drug lifestyle, by selling drugs. In addition, Murphy observes that drug courts and treatment facilities benefit economically from their cooperation, creating a very powerful institutional arrangement.

Murphy contextualizes her findings within theories of medical sociology as well as criminology to identify the policy implications of a medicalized view of addiction.

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