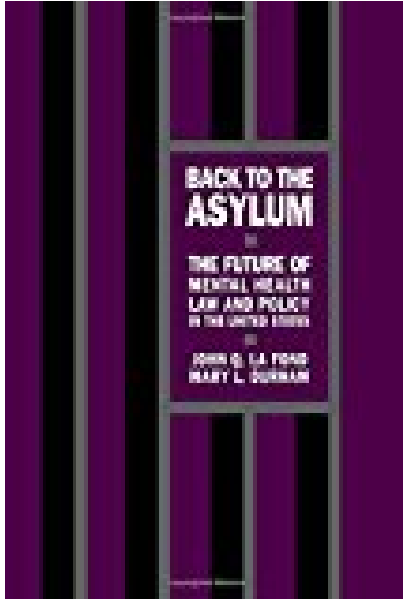# Back to the Asylum The Future of Mental Health Law and Policy in the United States

BOOK DETAILS

- Author : John Q. LaFond
- Pages : 280 Pages
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

Today, American mental health law and policy promote the restoring of "law and order" in the community rather than protecting civil liberties for the individual. This compelling book recounts how and why mental health law is being reshaped to safeguard society rather than mentally ill citizens. The authors, both experts in the field, convincingly demonstrate how rapidly changing American values ignited two very different visions of justice for the mentally ill. They argue that during the "Liberal era"-- from 1960 to 1980-- Americans staunchly supported civil liberties for all, particularly for disadvantaged citizens like the mentally ill. Also, criminal law provided ample opportunities for mentally ill offenders to avoid criminal punishment for their crimes, and restrictive civil commitment laws made it difficult to hospitalize the mentally disabled against their will. During the "Neoconservative era"--from 1980 on-- however, the public demanded new laws as a result of the rise in crime and the increasing number of homeless in communities. These changes make it much more difficult for mentally ill offenders to escape criminal blame and far easier to put disturbed citizens into hospitals against their will. Back to the Asylum accurately describes how this abrupt shift in from protecting individual rights to protecting the community has had a major impact on the mentally ill. It examines these legal changes in their broader social context and offers a provocative analysis of these law reforms. Finally, this timely work forecasts the future of mental health law and policy as America enters the twenty-first century.

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