



Policing and the Mentally Ill: International Perspectives (Advances in Police Theory and Practice)

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In countries with democratic traditions, police interactions with the mentally ill are usually guided by legislative mandates giving police discretion and possibly resulting in referrals for assistance and treatment. But all too frequently, the outcome of these interactions is far less therapeutic and leads to a cycle of arrests and ultimately incarceration. Stemming from an initiative in Memphis, Tennessee two decades ago, police departments in many parts of the world have set up specific programs with crisis intervention teams to facilitate police contact with the mentally ill. **Policing and the Mentally Ill: International Perspectives** examines how these types of programs have fared in jurisdictions across the world.

The book begins with developments in North America and Europe—traditionally the locus of much of the innovation and change in policing and related areas. It demonstrates how a number of jurisdictions in Europe have only recently begun to recognize therapeutic intervention with the mentally ill as a priority issue, and still frequently suffer from a lack of significant resources. The largest section of the book focuses on Australia, where local law enforcement agencies have displayed a remarkable enthusiasm for and commitment to change in their management of interactions with citizens with mental illness. Finally, the book examines the particular challenges of providing humane and effective policing for persons with mental illnesses in parts of the developing world. These challenges often involve dealing with entrenched cultural beliefs and practices based on superstition, fear, and prejudice regarding persons thought to be mentally ill.

Interactions between police and persons with mental illnesses comprise an important and sensitive aspect of everyday policing. The 16 chapters in this book offer a wide range of cross-cultural perspectives on this essential aspect of policing, enabling police practitioners to develop a best practices approach to managing their interactions with this vulnerable segment of the community.

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