



Asylum to Action: Paddington Day Hospital, Therapeutic Communities and Beyond (Community, Culture and Change)

Helen Spandler

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Asylum to Action offers an alternative history of a libertarian therapeutic community at Paddington Day Hospital in West London in the 1970s. Helen Spandler recaptures the radical aspirations, as well as the conflicts, of the early therapeutic community movement, radical psychiatry and the patients' movement.

The author's account of the formation of the Mental Patients' Union, the first politicised psychiatric survivors group in the UK, raises questions about the connections between the service user movement, therapeutic communities, critiques of psychiatry and psychoanalytic models of intervention. In particular, Spandler challenges Claire Baron's dominant account of the subject in her influential book *Asylum to Anarchy*. She points out that some of the key difficulties that beset Paddington Day Hospital persist in modern therapeutic community practice and, indeed, in mental health services in general. Arguing that these dilemmas require sustained attention, *Asylum to Action* also informs a wider analysis of the significance of social movements, social action and critical social theory.

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