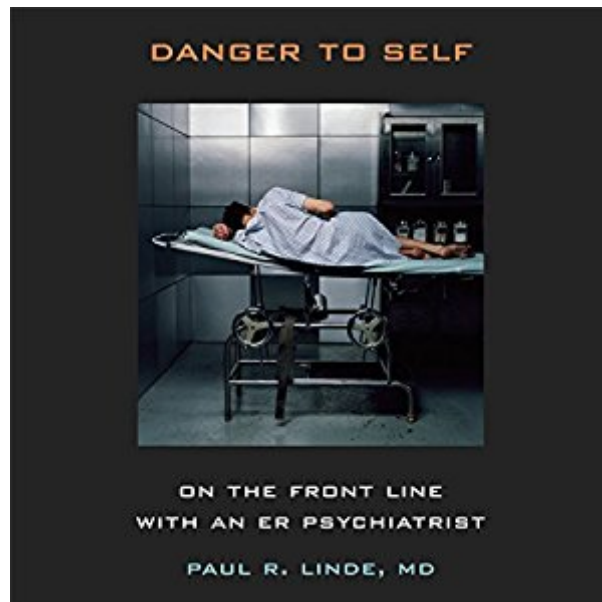


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Danger To Self: On The Front Line With An ER Psychiatrist



Synopsis

The psychiatric emergency room, a fast-paced combat zone with pressure to match, thrusts its medical providers into the outland of human experience where they must respond rapidly and decisively in spite of uncertainty and, very often, danger. In this lively first-person narrative, Paul R. Linde takes listeners behind the scenes at an urban psychiatric emergency room, with all its chaos and pathos, where we witness mental health professionals doing their best to alleviate suffering and repair shattered lives. As he and his colleagues encounter patients who are hallucinating, drunk, catatonic, aggressive, suicidal, high on drugs, paranoid, and physically sick, Linde examines the many ethical, legal, moral, and medical issues that confront today's psychiatric providers. He describes a profession under siege from the outside - health insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry, government regulators, and even "patients' rights" advocates - and from the inside - biomedical and academic psychiatrists who have forgotten to care for the patient and have instead become checklist-marking pill-peddlers. While lifting the veil on a crucial area of psychiatry that is as real as it gets, *Danger to Self* also injects a healthy dose of compassion into the practice of medicine and psychiatry.

Book Information

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Administration & Medicine Economics > Health Care Delivery

Customer Reviews

If you were repulsed by "Weekends at Bellevue", you will find not only much humanity but much substance (briefly and concisely presented) in Linde's book. Since I've been an um...customer.. in the very same facilities Dr. Linde has worked at, I was most eager to read the book. I've also

worked with the mentally ill as well. The way that he frames very crucial issues was really important and vital to anyone who wants to understand the challenges of dealing with mental illness in the US today, especially issues of homelessness, "Free Will", compliance and non-compliance, and the tricky judgement calls that doctors have to make often with sparse information at hand. There is one sad tale of how he misjudged the suicidality of a patient; and another white-knuckle story of how he had to advocated for a liver transplant for a suicidal patient, a "high risk", as judged by the team that assess who will receive a life-saving transplant- and who will not. It's situations like that that make one say "I wouldn't want your job for the world". The burden of responsibility is great. How reassuring it is to know that someone as caring as Dr. Linde is in that position, as psychiatry is a field highly susceptible to abuse and neglect-- there is a long, sad history of how we arrive at the deinstitutionalization movement that resulted in the droves of ill homeless people we see today. It's very informative to the layman, without being too technical, in terms of laying out the legal, ethical and practical issues of mental health care. As Linde states, professionals may want to refer to more in-depth sources for full coverage of the issues.

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