



Chronic Illness, Vulnerability and Social Work: Autoimmunity and the contemporary disease experience (Routledge Advances in Social Work)

Liz Price, Liz Walker

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Whilst the body has recently assumed greater sociological significance, there has been less engagement in social work and social care on the bodily experience of health, illness and disease. This innovative volume redresses the balance by exploring chronic illness and social work, through the specific lens of autoimmunity, engaging in wider debates around vulnerability, resistance and the lived experience of ongoing ill-health.

Moving beyond existing conceptualisations of vulnerability as an issue of mental distress, ageing, child protection and poverty, Price and Walker demonstrate the role that society has to play in actively engaging the physical body, rather than working around and through it. The book focuses on auto-immune conditions such as lupus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and scleroderma. Conditions like these allow for an exploration of the materiality of illness which exacerbates social and economic vulnerability and may precipitate personal and social crises, requiring a variety of interventions and support. The risks and challenges associated with chronic illness include disruptions to a sense of self and identity, altered relationships and the renegotiation of roles and responsibilities in a variety of relationships in addition to an economic impact, with the potential for disruption to employment status and financial insecurity.

This text opens up a range of debates around some of the central concerns of the social work profession, including vulnerability, ill-health, and independence. It will be of interest to scholars and students of social work, nursing, disability studies, medicine and the social sciences.

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