



Substance Use and Abuse: Sociological Perspectives

Victor N. Shaw

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While the issues of substance use and abuse have been addressed from a variety of perspectives and approaches, the fundamental social issues have not been covered in any systematic way. This book represents the first academic effort to apply major sociological theories to the field of substance use and abuse in order to provide readers with a solid knowledge base from which they may develop more informed ideas about prevention, intervention, treatment, law enforcement, and social reactions to this ubiquitous social problem. Using a systematic framework, Shaw reviews the existing literature, explains key concepts, addresses fundamental issues, and discusses the policy implications for public health, social control, community, and work. This comprehensive sociological treatment of substance use and abuse is essential reading for educators in public policy, sociology, criminology, and deviance.

Applying the major sociological theories of anomie, career, conflict, functionalist, rational choice, social control, social disorganization, social learning, social reaction, and subculture perspectives, Shaw provides an important overview of the issues involved with substance use and abuse. By utilizing such an approach, he demonstrates that public views, governmental policies, intervention strategies, and prevention programming can be informed by the different sociological theories. This unique consideration and analysis illustrates that no single view on substance use and abuse is absolute or sacred. Therefore, considering the issues from a variety of sociological perspectives will bring greater understanding to a pervasive social problem that continues to plague American society.

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