
Book reviews

You're under Arrest. By SHEILA HOLLINS, ISOBEL CLARE and GLYNIS MURPHY. London: Gaskell. 1996. 72 pp. £10 (pb). ISBN 1-901242-01-3.

You're on Trial. By SHEILA HOLLINS, GLYNIS MURPHY and ISOBEL CLARE. London: Gaskell. 1996. 72 pp. £10 (pb). ISBN 1-901242-00-5.

These books in the Books Beyond Words series use pictures with optional supporting text to tell the story about what happens when a vulnerable adult is arrested, accused of a crime and has to go to court for a trial. Both books aim to assist vulnerable adults in understanding police and court procedures, the experience of being a suspect and the role of the appropriate adult. In *You're under Arrest* 28 pictures with optional text clearly tell the step-by-step story of a vulnerable man who is arrested and placed in custody in a police cell. Several legal procedures are explained by the pictures, supporting text and supplementary notes including the 'caution' and roles of the police custody officer, solicitor, appropriate adults, police doctor and mental health workers who visit police stations. The rights of vulnerable adults with learning disabilities or mental health needs are clearly and carefully explained and their likely communication, reading and writing problems are acknowledged. The possibility that arrested vulnerable adults may require medication, to see a doctor and to have access to these books are also covered. The options following arrest are illustrated i.e. no further action, police bail, formal caution, being charged and going to court. In *You're under Arrest* the vulnerable man is not charged and allowed to go home. The story concludes with him seeing a mental health worker to help him understand his experiences and to try and make sure he is not under arrest again.

The complementary book *You're on Trial* tells the story of a vulnerable man accused and charged of a crime who has to go to court for a trial. Using 33 pictures with optional text and explanatory notes the criminal justice system, police and court procedures are systematically and comprehensively demonstrated. The book covers police arrest, questioning and being charged, being allowed bail and initial attendance at a magistrates' court. The pictures and text succinctly explain the roles of defence and prosecution solicitors, the appropriate adult, custody officer, court usher, magistrates, probation officer and mental health worker. Applying for Legal Aid, entering a plea, being remanded in custody, listening to witnesses, taking the oath,

reaching a verdict, sentencing and various disposal options are briefly but clearly covered. In this story, the vulnerable man is found guilty and has to see a probation officer for a pre-sentence report. The book includes illustration or discussion of most sentencing options available to the magistrates' court including being sent to prison or a psychiatric hospital, being placed on a Section, Guardianship or Probation Order, being fined or required to do some community service, receiving a suspended sentence, conditional or absolute discharge, and having to see a mental health worker.

Some adults with mild learning disabilities could independently work through and understand several pictures in both books. However, most adults with learning disabilities will require support and prompting from appropriate professionals, support workers or carers to fully benefit from working through the books. The optional text and explanatory notes that can be used alongside the pictures will be particularly useful for those without personal first-hand experience of the criminal justice system with its many players and complex, often confusing, procedures. Thus, I envisage the books being used with adults with learning disabilities to both prepare and educate them about the criminal justice system, as well as to provide structured accessible support and information for those currently involved with the police and courts.

The authors and illustrator (Beth Webb) are to be commended for producing these much needed high quality and user-friendly books which will prove invaluable and enjoyable learning materials. Both these books should be made available and will prove extremely useful to adults with learning disabilities as well as those working with them in learning disabilities, mental health, social, police and court services. I recommend these books as essential reading and purchases for learning disabilities and mental health service workers.

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Depression in General Practice. By ANDRÉ TYLEE, ROBERT G. PRIEST and ANN ROBERTS. London: Martin Dunitz. 1996. 55 pp. £9.95. ISBN 1-85317-288-X.

This is a very useful guide to depressive illness – for patients! Unfortunately, this is not the target