**Abstract**

In this book, Uri Aviram investigates Israel’s efforts to reform its mental-health services in accordance with trends and innovations in advanced countries in the treatment and rehabilitation of people with mental illness since the second half of the twentieth century. Since the 1970s, Israel has been trying to shift the focus of its mental-health services from a system based largely on psychiatric hospitals to the community, and to strike a balance between the delivery of appropriate medical, nursing, and rehabilitative care and the preservation and advancement of patients’ rights and liberty. Until 2015, when an attempt was made to transfer responsibility for mental-health services to the HMOs—the success of which still awaits evaluation—attempts in this direction had not gone well. Just the same, several changes occurred, such as reducing the number of psychiatric beds in inpatient institutions, shortening inpatient stays, and establishing a community-based rehabilitation array.

The book examines the extent of the problem, society’s response to mental illness, difficulties in reliable diagnosis and choice of treatment programs of proven utility, and various aspects of the interface of psychiatry and law. The book also relates to the economic and social costs of dealing with the mental-health problem in society and addresses issues associated with the improvement of services. The author analyzes the factors that inhibit the requisite reforms and the conditions and actions that are needed to promote worthy changes. The book may also be useful to other countries and authorities that are interested in mental-health service reform. Throughout, its goals are three: to enhance the health and quality of life of those who suffer from mental illnesses, to do the same for the family members who care for them, and to bring economic and social utility to the community.

**About the Author**

Uri Aviram is the Zena Harman Professor Emeritus of Social Work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also headed the Tel Aviv University School of Social Work and the Hebrew University School of Social Work; held positions at research institutes and academic institutions abroad; and recently was Dean of the School of Social and Community Sciences at Ruppin Academic Center. His academic work focuses on researching mental-health policies and services; the interface of psychiatry and law, and rehabilitation in the community of persons with psychiatric disabilities. He is the former chair of the Israel National Council for the Rehabilitation in the Community of Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities.