

Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition



Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition by Liat Ben-Moshe

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with over 2 million people behind bars. A disproportionate number of these individuals are people with disabilities. In fact, people with mental illness are 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than those without mental illness. This is a direct result of the systemic oppression of people with disabilities, which includes a long history of deinstitutionalization and the criminalization of poverty and mental illness.

Deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization is the process of moving people with disabilities out of institutions and into community-based settings. This process began in the 1950s with the advent of new psychiatric medications. However, deinstitutionalization was not accompanied by adequate funding for

community-based services. As a result, many people with disabilities were left homeless, unemployed, and without access to the support they needed.

The lack of community-based services led to an increase in the criminalization of people with disabilities. People with mental illness were often arrested for minor offenses, such as loitering or disturbing the peace. They were then funneled into the criminal justice system, where they were often subjected to abuse and neglect.

Prison Abolition

Prison abolition is the movement to end the use of prisons and jails. Prison abolitionists argue that prisons are violent, racist, and ineffective institutions that do not make our communities safer. They believe that we should invest in community-based solutions to the problems that lead to crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and mental illness.

Decarcerating Disability

The movement to decarcerate disability is a call to end the systemic oppression of people with disabilities. This includes ending the criminalization of poverty and mental illness, and providing adequate funding for community-based services. Decarcerating disability will require a fundamental shift in the way we think about disability, and a commitment to creating a more just and equitable society.

How to Get Involved

There are many ways to get involved in the movement to decarcerate disability. Here are a few ideas:

*** Support organizations that are working to end the criminalization of poverty and mental illness.* Educate yourself and others about the intersectionality of disability, deinstitutionalization, and prison abolition.* Advocate for policies that will provide adequate funding for community-based services for people with disabilities.* Challenge the stigma associated with disability and mental illness.**

The movement to decarcerate disability is a vital part of the fight for a more just and equitable society. By ending the systemic oppression of people with disabilities, we can create a world where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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