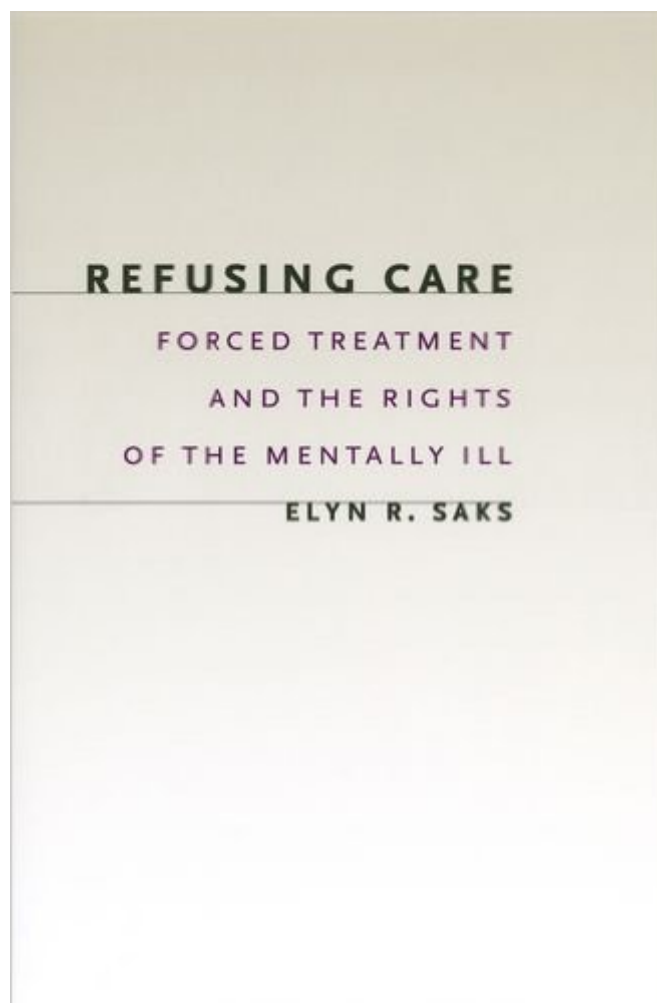


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# Refusing Care: Forced Treatment And The Rights Of The Mentally Ill



## Synopsis

It has been said that how a society treats its least well-off members speaks volumes about its humanity. If so, our treatment of the mentally ill suggests that American society is inhumane: swinging between overintervention and utter neglect, we sometimes force extreme treatments on those who do not want them, and at other times discharge mentally ill patients who do want treatment without providing adequate resources for their care in the community. Focusing on overinterventionist approaches, *Refusing Care* explores when, if ever, the mentally ill should be treated against their will. Basing her analysis on case and empirical studies, Elyn R. Saks explores dilemmas raised by forced treatment in three contexts—civil commitment (forced hospitalization for noncriminals), medication, and seclusion and restraints. Saks argues that the best way to solve each of these dilemmas is, paradoxically, to be both more protective of individual autonomy and more paternalistic than current law calls for. For instance, while Saks advocates relaxing the standards for first commitment after a psychotic episode, she also would prohibit extreme mechanical restraints (such as tying someone spread-eagled to a bed). Finally, because of the often extreme prejudice against the mentally ill in American society, Saks proposes standards that, as much as possible, should apply equally to non-mentally ill and mentally ill people alike. Mental health professionals, lawyers, disability rights activists, and anyone who wants to learn more about the way the mentally ill are treated—and ought to be treated—in the United States should read *Refusing Care*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a very interesting book. The author writes about both sides of the topic that she's discussing (from the patient / psychiatrist view or a lawyer). Topics include refusing medication, involuntary hospitalization, seclusion, restraints etc. Very educational.

Excellent book about the way the health system deals with the mentally ill. Touches on how the health care system and lawyers are on two different views and how they try to help each other. If you have a loved one in the health system and going in and out of hospitals this is a must read. Helps you understand the mentally ill's rights and your own.

If you're involved with this topic this book will help shed some light on it.

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