Barriers to Information: How Formal Help Systems Fail Battered Women (Contributions in Librarianship & Information Science)

Patricia Dewdney, Roma Harris

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Ordinary citizens face a frustrating and increasingly complex maze of human service agencies when they seek help for everyday problems, even though one stop information and referral centers have been established to facilitate information seeking in many communities. This book explores the relationship between the information needs of battered women and the information response provided through social networks in six communities of varying size.

The book is based on an award-winning study, in which 543 women described their knowledge of the problem of woman abuse and what kinds of information resources would be helpful to an abused woman. In the second phase of the study, 179 interviews were conducted with service providers identified by these women as likely sources of help. A comparison of the interviews demonstrates that the response of information delivery systems does not adequately meet the needs and expectations of those women who would seek such services. The final chapters of the volume focus on the implications of this study for the design of social service systems.

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