



Complicated Lives: Girls, Parents, Drugs, and Juvenile Justice

Vera Lopez

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Complicated Lives focuses on the lives of sixty-five drug-using girls in the juvenile justice system (living in group homes, a residential treatment center, and a youth correctional facility) who grew up in families characterized by parental drug use, violence, and child maltreatment. Vera Lopez situates girls' relationships with parents who fail to live up to idealized parenting norms and examines how these relationships change over time, and ultimately contribute to the girls' future drug use and involvement in the justice system.

While Lopez's subjects express concerns and doubt in their chances for success, Lopez provides an optimistic prescription for reform and improvement of the lives of these young women and presents a number of suggestions ranging from enhanced cultural competency training for all juvenile justice professionals to developing stronger collaborations between youth and adult serving systems and agencies.

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