



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN**
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 22

Issue 1 March - Special Issue on Social Work
with Minority and Ethnic Groups

Article 24

March 1995

Women Who Hurt Themselves. Dusty Miller.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Clinical and Medical Social Work Commons, and the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

(1995) "Women Who Hurt Themselves. Dusty Miller.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 22 :
Iss. 1 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol22/iss1/24>

This Book Note is brought to you by the Western
Michigan University School of Social Work. For more
information, please contact [wmu-
scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).



offers opportunities for artistic expression is highly effective. Its oral histories are perhaps of most significance to social scientists. They unveil the essence of what it means to be a Latina lesbian today.

Dusty Miller, *Women Who Hurt Themselves*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. \$22 hardcover.

In this book, psychotherapist Dusty Miller discusses the problem of Trauma Reenactment Syndrome, a condition in which people repeatedly inflict physical harm and pain on themselves. Although both men and women are involved, TRS occurs more frequently among women than men.

TRS is a complicated syndrome which is manifested not only in self-inflicted pain but by intense secrecy about sufferers' personal lives, a failure to respond to traditional psychotherapy, and a disassociated personality which often fragments into three-part self consisting of the victim, the abuser and an uninvolved 'bystander'.

Miller is an authority on TRS and its treatment, and her book is intended to offer insights into this condition as well as prescriptions for effective intervention. She provides gripping case histories of some of her clients and shows that many have failed to respond to treatment, and particularly behavioral treatments which do not deal with the complex causative factors underlying this condition. Her own therapeutic prescriptions involve a time-consuming but effective system of care that uncovers the hidden childhood experiences of abusive relationships that most of her clients have encountered. She also advocates the active involvement of family members and friends. The book is a useful guide to this little known condition and will be of interest to practitioners as well as other social scientists interested in family abuse.

Valerie Polakow: *Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and their Children in the Other America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. \$22.50 hardcover.

As Polakow shows in this readable and important book, more than thirteen million children live in poverty in the United States today. The vast majority are to be found in poor single-