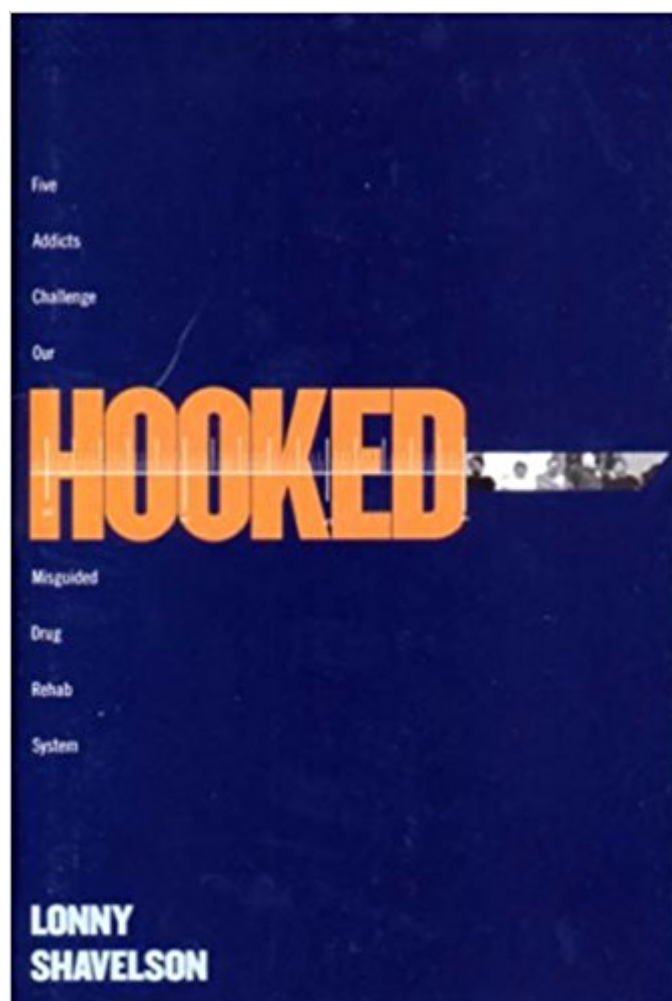


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# Hooked: Five Addicts Challenge Our Misguided Drug Rehabilitation System



## Synopsis

A powerful critique of our current drug-rehab system, through the stories of the addicts inside it. Lonny Shavelson's 1995 book on euthanasia, *A Chosen Death*, spoke to us at the right time: it engaged that most difficult issue with such personally moving stories that it was serialized in *People* magazine, leading to uncommon book sales for serious nonfiction. Now *Hooked* comes as we are finally waking up to the inadequacies of our current drug-rehab policies. With court-mandated rehab being debated across the country, Shavelson's in-depth look at the struggles of five addicts as they travel through the treatment maze makes a powerful case for reform. Highly readable and shaped by Shavelson's experiences as a journalist and physician, *Hooked* takes us through the anguishing "intake" and controversial House meetings, inside counselors' and judges' offices where many treatment decisions are made, and to prison cells where, under current policies, many addicts end up. It explores the links between drug addiction, mental illness, and trauma, including child abuse; links often ignored by current rehab efforts; and argues for an integrated approach that treats the roots of drug abuse, not just the behavior itself. Sure to play a major role in the national debates, *Hooked* offers a provocative, honest look at the seemingly intractable issue of drug addiction, and offers powerful alternatives to our current policies. 24 black-and-white photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Over 2 million Americans in prison, another million each year arrested on drug charges, economic

development tied grimly to building prisons and jails. America made a wrong turn somewhere. It isn't like we don't know where and when. It was when we lost faith in the ability of therapists to treat addicts, became afraid and decided they must go to jail and for longer and longer periods of time. Those who understand addiction know that jail sentences do not cure it, regardless of the length. But, judges and prosecutors and victims and voters don't care. They want to feel safe. So the burden falls on those of us who believe drug treatment is a better alternative. And our confidence is shaken by pretty low success rates. Lonny Shavelson has discovered what most have missed. We cannot clean up the addicts until we clean up the treatment system. The system has built a career on convincing us that if someone does not do well in recovery it is not the fault of the therapy or therapist. "The addict just didn't want it badly enough," they say. Not true, Shavelson argues. His book is a must read for policymakers looking for what Shavelson calls, "the elusive secret to effective rehab." It is coerced treatment, make 'em go and make 'em stay long enough for it to work. But...and this is the key to Shavelson's book...the "secret lies...not only in coercing addicts into programs, but in coercing the programs to do rehab right." No legislator or governor should spend another nickel on treatment until they read this book and put it to work in the treatment system. Treatment folks should read it as a "self help" guide. Hold up the mirror to your face! For all of you, a curious thing will happen as you read this book.

Hooked is a very good book. It starts off as one of those investigative journalist things with a description of real drug addicts. Often books of this type look at these people as if they were the inmates of a zoo, but rather than doing that the book uses their problems to illustrate the difficulties which plague organisations which provide assistance to drug addicts. One woman suffers from a combination of mental illness and drug abuse. Her attempts to find help are continually frustrated by the fact that when she applies for assistance from mental health professionals she is told that she has a drug problem and she is referred onwards. When she speaks to drug agencies she is told that she has a mental health problem and told to see a psychologist. In the last chapter of the book she is able to find an agency which will help her, but this occurs only after the intervention of one of the doctors. The intake staff is concerned about accepting her as they prefer people who have fewer problems and who are easy to deal with. A lot of the book is focused on one person Mike who attends a live in facility for close to a year. His story illustrates how current rehabilitation facilities fail to have access to services such as detoxification and also use ritual humiliation as a means of controlling the inmates. Mike breaks a rule by developing a relationship with another inmate. He has to sit in a chair for three days and to go through a re-education session similar to those that featured

in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The author makes the point that the people running the program are generally untrained and not able to work out when such treatment is appropriate or whether those who might be put through it could suffer from major mental illnesses.

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