



Life Inside: A Memoir

Mindy Lewis

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Life Inside: A Memoir Mindy Lewis

The patient is an ascetically pretty 15½-year-old white female. She is intelligent, fearful, extremely anxious, and depressed. Her rage is poorly controlled and inappropriately expressed.

Diagnostic Impression: *Program for social recovery in a supportive and structured environment appears favorable.*

Life Inside

In 1967, three months before her sixteenth birthday, Mindy Lewis was sent to a state psychiatric hospital by court order. She had been skipping school, smoking pot, and listening to too much Dylan. Her mother, at a loss for what else to do, decided that Mindy remain in state custody until she turned eighteen and became a legal, law-abiding, "healthy" adult.

Life Inside is Mindy's story about her coming-of-age during those tumultuous years. In honest, unflinching prose, she paints a richly textured portrait of her stay on a psychiatric ward -- the close bonds and rivalries among adolescent patients, the politics and routines of institutional life, the extensive use of medication, and the prevalence of life-altering misdiagnoses. But this memoir also takes readers on a journey of recovery as Lewis describes her emergence into adulthood and her struggle to transcend the stigma of institutionalization. Bracingly told, and often terrifying in its truths, *Life Inside* is a life-affirming memoir that informs as it inspires.

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