

Moral Wages: The Emotional Dilemmas of Victim Advocacy and Counseling

Kenneth H. Kolb

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Moral Wages: The Emotional Dilemmas of Victim Advocacy and Counseling Kenneth H. Kolb Moral Wages offers the reader a vivid depiction of what it is like to work inside an agency that assists victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Based on over a year of fieldwork by a man in a setting many presume to be hostile to men, this ethnographic account is unlike most research on the topic of violence against women. Instead of focusing on the victims or perpetrators of abuse, Moral Wages focuses exclusively on the service providers in the middle. It shows how victim advocates and counselors—who don't enjoy extrinsic benefits like pay, power, and prestige—are sustained by a different kind of compensation. As long as they can overcome a number of workplace dilemmas, they earn a special type of emotional reward reserved for those who help others in need: moral wages. As their struggles mount, though, it becomes clear that their jobs often put them in impossible situations—requiring them to aid and feel for vulnerable clients, yet giving them few and feeble tools to combat a persistent social problem.



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