

**Book Review Department**

HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, A Social Systems Approach, Second Edition.  
Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1978.

This book is designed as an introductory text for students in social work, education, nursing, and other disciplines providing human services. The authors provide a clear, relatively elementary review of ideas which they consider to be useful for understanding a social systems perspective of human behavior.

There are six chapters: 1) The Social Systems Approach; 2) Culture and Society; 3) Communities and Organizations; 4) Groups; 5) Families; and 6) The Person. The first chapter introduces and explains general characteristics of social systems. The remaining chapters apply these basic ideas to areas which are common foci for studying human behavior. Each chapter has an annotated list of suggested readings. There is also a glossary of the key concepts.

The authors suggested that the topical chapters can be used individually as modules which require only the first chapter as precedent. As a result this text can be used for courses focusing on the person, the family, the small group, the community, the formal organization, or society as well as for a general course on human behavior because an instructor not

only can rearrange the order of the subsequent chapters but also can omit one or more of them.

I used the first edition as an instructor for campus-based and extension-service graduate social work courses focusing on complex organizations, and on community structure and processes. Students in these courses who did not have a strong foundation in social science found that reading chapters from this text were helpful for better understanding the idea of a social system. Although the authors indicate that this book can be used in graduate schools, undergraduate colleges, and perhaps in-service training programs, the most appropriate application as a text seems to be for teaching students who have not been introduced to social systems conceptualization. The authors have attempted not to overwhelm a reader: the chapters are brief, generally less than twentyfive pages in length, and the manner of presentation is straightforward.

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ALCOHOL — THE CRUTCH THAT CRIPPLES, Brent Q. Hafen, West Publishing Co., U.S.A., pp. 224 including appendix, bibliography and Index.

Whatever may be the reasons to repeal the country-wide legal ban and the experience and aftermath of withdrawal of prohibition, the American Society is at present experimenting with other methods of dealing with alcohol problem. During the last two decades or so, the younger generation has turned to alcohol in a big way and to quote the words of a survey conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "it drinks too much". Facts recently gathered by the N.I.A.A.A. are both impressive and depressive. No wonder that Brent & Hafen, author of *ALCOHOL: The Crutch that Cripples*, draws the conclusion: "Alcohol is America's most destructive drug. By whatever standard we assess a drug problem — extent of use and abuse; availability; cost in dollars, disease, crime and death — alcohol is number one."

Hafen feels that the problem of alcohol abuse, which has the dimensions of a national health problem, has not received the serious attention it deserves. He maintains that the key to developing

awareness among people about the need for rejecting alcohol as a part of their life-style is to convince them that chemical intervention is unnecessary for coping with various problems a modern man is facing.

Hafen quotes liberally from the research and writings of prominent experts in the field of alcohol and alcoholism. The chapters on "Effects of Alcoholic beverages on the body", "Alcohol related behaviours", "problem drinking" and "treatment of alcoholism" will be found extremely useful not only by the general reader but specially by the students of social and health services. The views expressed by the author in the last two chapters which deal with preventing alcohol problems and alcoholism and re-orienting laws, regulations and drinking patterns reflect the balanced and pragmatic attitude of a person who is actively involved in field and research work. Hafen notes that "moral exhortations and scare tactics have for the most part met with failure". He discusses the current public education efforts in the United States.