

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 • Introduction to Forensic Psychology

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INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Shortly before midnight on December 2, 2016, fire broke out during a party in a converted warehouse in Oakland, California, resulting in 36 deaths. Forensic investigators were called in not only to identify the bodies, but also to determine the cause of the blaze. The warehouse, known as the “Ghost Ship,” was an artists’ collective in which artists lived and shared work space. Federal investigators ruled out arson but said faulty electrical wiring could have caused the fire.

In 2017, after a man rammed his car through a crowd of people marching for social justice in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing one woman, forensic psychologists assessed his mental status, including his competency to stand trial.

Forensic experts of a different type have investigated numerous computer crimes in the 21st century, including ransomware attacks and hacking into databases containing credit card information.

When the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentry into the Earth’s atmosphere in 2003 and when a bomb was detonated in New York’s Times Square in 2010, these events were investigated by scientists representing various federal, state, and private agencies. Likewise, when bombs disrupted the Boston Marathon in 2013, killing three and injuring more than 260 others, scientists examined the crime scene as well as the remnants of the incendiary materials.

Some of these incidents will be revisited in later chapters. As all indicate, the term *forensic* refers to scientific activities pertaining or potentially pertaining to law, both civil and criminal. Forensic scientists participate in the investigation of major crimes—not necessarily violent ones—and are present at many accident scenes. Forensic scientists also may offer services in civil suits, such as one where plaintiffs are claiming water contamination or challenging the effects of prescribed medication.

Forensic science has become an all-encompassing professional activity and a popular career choice among students. Nearly every profession, including psychology, has a forensic specialization. Many

Chapter Objectives

- Define forensic psychology and trace its historical development.
- Identify career areas in the forensic sciences.
- Distinguish forensic psychology from other forensic sciences.
- Identify and describe major subareas of forensic psychology.
- Summarize the educational, training, and certification requirements to become a forensic psychologist.
- Illustrate roles and tasks performed by forensic psychologists.

people are confused about the various forensic areas and assume that professionals within these fields do largely the same thing. It will become clear in this book, however, that they do not. What they do have in common, in addition to their association with the law, is the fact that all of these fields are based on research and scientific principles. Although **forensic psychology** is the subject of this text, it is helpful to begin with illustrations of other forensic sciences for comparison purposes.

THE FORENSIC SCIENCES

In addition to forensic psychology, the forensic fields include forensic engineering, forensic linguistics, forensic pharmacy, forensic oceanography, forensic medicine, forensic digital investigation, forensic social work, forensic nursing, forensic pathology, forensic anthropology, and forensic archaeology—and these are but a few examples. The focus of each discipline is evident from the terms. Forensic linguistics, for example, is concerned with the in-depth evaluation of language-related characteristics of text, such as grammar, syntax, spelling, vocabulary, and phraseology. Forensic anthropology refers to the identification of skeletal, badly decomposed, or otherwise unidentified human remains. Forensic pathology is that branch of medicine concerned with diseases and disorders of the body that relate to questions that might come before the court. The forensic pathologist—popularly depicted in shows such as the *CSI* series, *Bones*, and *NCIS* and in crime novels and even memoirs—examines the bodies of crime victims for clues about the victim's demise. Forensic anthropologists and forensic pathologists often work in conjunction with homicide investigators to identify the person who died, discover evidence of foul play, and help establish the age, sex, height, ancestry, and other unique features of the decedent from skeletal remains. Forensic nurses, who often work in hospital emergency departments, are nurses with special training in the collection of evidence pertinent to a crime, such as a sexual assault. Forensic pharmacists are highly knowledgeable about drugs and their interactions. Many of these professionals teach courses, offer workshops, and consult with lawyers preparing cases. They also often testify in both criminal and civil courts.

Forensic laboratories are usually maintained or sponsored by governmental agencies specifically to examine physical evidence in criminal and civil matters. In 2014, there were 409 publicly funded forensic crime labs in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016). The scientists working in these laboratories are expected to prepare reports and provide courtroom testimony on the physical evidence if needed. Alternatively, private laboratories, some of which operate in university settings, provide services to governmental agencies on a contractual basis or employ scientists who conduct independent research.

Scientists from both public and private laboratories may be asked to examine and testify about latent fingerprints, hair fibers, firearms and ballistics, blood spatter, explosives and fire debris, toxic material, and other pertinent evidence found at or near a crime scene or tragic accident. Some forensic labs are better at investigating certain types of evidence than others, and the news media occasionally uncover deficiencies in labs, such as the misuse of DNA evidence or the failure to process rape kits in a timely manner. On a more positive note, a lab maintained by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was instrumental in investigating a major product-tampering case that occurred in the United States in 1982 involving over-the-counter Tylenol capsules purchased in six different stores in the Chicago area. After seven persons collapsed and died soon after taking the pills, chemical investigation revealed that the capsules had been laced with potassium cyanide. FDA chemists developed fingerprinting-like techniques that allowed authorities to trace the cyanide back to the specific manufacturer and distributor (Stehlin, 1995). Unfortunately, despite

the fact that the poison was identified and the source was traced, the perpetrator was never found, but the case did change the way we purchase and consume over-the-counter medications (Markel, 2014). Forensic examination indicated that the bottles had been removed from drug store shelves, laced with cyanide, and returned to shelves to be purchased by unknowing victims. The FDA and the manufacturer of Tylenol introduced new tamper-proof packaging, which included foil seals and other safeguards to indicate to the consumer if the package had been tampered with.

Forensic laboratories also often employ scientists who specialize in **forensic entomology**, which is the study of insects (and their arthropod relatives) as it relates to legal issues. This specialty is becoming increasingly important in both civil and criminal investigations. For example, entomological investigations of termite infestation may be used to support civil litigation dealing with real estate, pest control, or landlord–tenant disputes. In another context, forensic entomology may be useful in investigations of food contamination. Scientists try to determine where an infestation occurred (e.g., which warehouse or store), when it occurred, and whether it was accidental or the possible result of human tampering. (Whether there actually was negligence or evil intent, though, is left to the courts to decide.) In criminal investigations, forensic entomology is used to determine the time since death (postmortem interval), the location of the death, placement or movement of the body, and manner of death.

Still another science represented in forensic laboratories is forensic document examination. This science analyzes handwriting, print fonts, the authenticity of signatures, alterations in documents, charred or water-damaged paper, the significance of inks and papers, photocopying processes, writing instruments, sequence of writing, and other elements of a document to establish authorship and authenticity. The process is often called **questioned document examination or analysis**. The questioned document may be a check, a threatening letter, a hold-up note, a credit application or receipt, a will, an investment record, a tax form, or a medical record (R. Morris, 2000). Questioned document analysis can be applied to many types of investigations, including fraud, homicide, suicide, sexual offenses, blackmail, bombings, and arson. Questioned handwriting analysis, for example, may include the forensic examination of a signature, a handwritten letter, entries on a form, or even graffiti on a wall. A forensic document examiner (FDE) may be asked to examine and render opinions on the authorship of writing on building walls, recover engraved or obliterated writing on different types of surfaces, or determine the brand or model of keyboards, printers, embossers, inks, and printing processes (R. Morris, 2000).

An increasingly relevant electronic forensic specialty is **digital investigative analysis** (DIA). Anyone who has experienced hard drive failure or other digital memory loss can recall the momentary panic it engenders. We now know that most “lost” data can actually be recovered. As embarrassed politicians, their staffs, and other high-profile professionals and public figures have learned, e-mail or text messages on computers, online voicemail systems, tablets, or smartphones do not inevitably disappear in cyberspace, even with the press of the delete key or the smash of a hammer. Shortly after two individuals killed 14 people in a terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015, digital analysts were able to find evidence that they had planned other attacks from equipment in their home that had been smashed. Today, with increases in mobile devices, electronic data can exist in multiple locations, and a skillful forensic data recovery specialist can usually find them. A digital investigative analyst has the training to seize, search, and analyze electronic media originating from a variety of operating systems pursuant to the execution of a search warrant or subpoena. Without specialized training, though, a law enforcement officer armed with a search warrant would not be advised to open computer files from the office or home of a person suspected of bank fraud or one suspected of distributing child pornography.

The major goal of the specialist or investigator is to recover the data or images without modifying them. These skills are used in a wide variety of investigations, such as fraud, embezzlement, political corruption, child pornography, identity theft, document forgery, software piracy, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and terrorist activity.

With the creation of new technologies doubling about every 2 or 3 years (Friedman, 2016), the recovery of digital evidence becomes increasingly challenging, however. Today, forensic digital analysts examine everything digital “including desktop computers, laptops, mobile devices (cell phones and tablets), GPS navigation devices, vehicle computer systems, Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and much more” (Carroll, 2017, p. 25). Mobile phones have drawn the greatest amount of forensic scrutiny. As noted by Ogden (2017), “[w]ith mobile devices allowing consumers to communicate, socialize, bank, shop, navigate, start their car, track their health, and monitor their in-home surveillance cameras, a plethora of information is contained on these devices” (p. 11). And each year smartphones increase their security features, making them more challenging for digital investigators to decipher.

As is apparent from the preceding illustrations, forensic investigations usually require expertise in chemistry, biology, physics, or other sciences, including electronic technology. Although streaming services, television, movies, and novels provide numerous graphic examples of forensic examinations of evidence, the extensive scientific preparation required to work in forensic laboratories is usually not emphasized. The scientists depicted typically have access to state-of-the-art equipment, and they are often glamorous or have complex emotional lives, a depiction that may be quite unrealistic. Many students express a keen interest in the forensic sciences and seriously consider pursuing a career in the field without fully understanding what it is or what is required to reach their goal.

The field of forensic psychology involves a very different type of preparation and is significantly different in content, but it, too, is scientifically based. Importantly, there are many different avenues to entering this field, as will become apparent in this text.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

For some time, the definition of forensic psychology has been in flux. As Otto and Ogloff (2014) observe, “[p]erhaps it is surprising, given the relatively long history and growth of forensic psychology over the past 40 years, that there is no uniform or consensual definition for this specialty area” (p. 35). In a similar way, John Brigham (1999) wrote that if a group of psychologists who interact with the legal system in some capacity are asked, “Are you a forensic psychologist?” many will say yes, some will say no, and a majority will probably admit they really do not know. Today, it is doubtful that a majority would say they do not know, but many might say, “It depends.” Referring to his own testimony in court back then, Brigham noted that, when asked the question, his most accurate response would be, “Well, it depends.”

As Brigham (1999) and Otto and Ogloff (2014) point out, differences in definition revolve around how narrowly or broadly the field is defined. Some of the professional literature refers to forensic psychology broadly as the *research* and *application* of psychological knowledge to the legal system, whereas some of it prefers a more narrow approach, limiting forensic psychology to the *application* and *practice* of psychology as it pertains to the legal system. Bartol and Bartol (1987) offered a broad definition:

We view forensic psychology broadly, as both (1) the research endeavor that examines aspects of human behavior directly related to the legal process . . . and (2) the professional practice of psychology within, or in consultation with, a legal system that embraces both civil and criminal law. (p. 3)

By contrast, Roesch (cited in Brigham, 1999) suggested a narrow definition: “Most psychologists define the area more narrowly to refer to clinical psychologists who are engaged in clinical practice within the legal system” (p. 279).

It is important to emphasize that both definitions presume an underlying scientific approach. Research endeavors and clinical practice are both scientifically based. As will be noted throughout the text, the knowledge gained through carefully conducted studies finds its way into education and training programs, consulting services, and a wide range of legal settings. However, a narrow definition of forensic psychology may be too restrictive because it seems to imply a specialty called “forensic *clinical* psychology.” Furthermore, it excludes—among others—clinicians who perform corrections-related tasks, such as assess inmates for parole decision-making purposes, or clinicians who offer consulting services to police departments. The broad definition, on the other hand, includes not only clinicians (also called practitioners) but also social, developmental, counseling, cognitive, experimental, industrial/organizational, geropsychology, and school psychologists—some but not all of whom are clinicians. They conduct research in areas that are highly relevant to the law, such as eyewitness memory, forensic interviewing of children, or jury decision making. The common link is their contribution to the legal system. We recognize, however, that only a small proportion of their work may be performed in this context, so they might not consider themselves forensic psychologists. So, Brigham was correct in answering, “It depends.”

DeMatteo, Marczyk, Krauss, and Burl (2009) noted that the lack of consensus for defining forensic psychology as well as the activities it comprises continued a decade later: “[T]here is considerable disagreement over the scope of forensic psychology and what activities (i.e., research, assessment, and treatment) and roles should appropriately be considered the exclusive province of forensic psychology” (p. 185). They pointed out that increasing dissatisfaction with narrow conceptualizations led the American Psychology–Law Society to endorse a broad definition, particularly one that would embrace the contributions of researchers as well as clinicians. Following these recommendations, the **Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology** (American Psychological Association [APA], 2013c) promoted a broad definition, which is one we endorse and illustrate throughout this text:

Forensic psychology refers to professional practice by any psychologist working within any sub-discipline of psychology (e.g., clinical, developmental, social, cognitive) when applying the scientific, technical, or specialized knowledge of psychology to the law to assist in addressing legal, contractual, and administrative matters. (p. 7)

The preceding broad definition of forensic psychology focuses primarily on forensic practice, referring as it does to the application of psychology’s specialized knowledge to the law. It is understood that this application must be based on solid research. The practice of forensic psychology, as it will be treated here, includes investigations, studies, evaluations, advice to attorneys, advisory opinions, and depositions or testimony to assist in the resolution of disputes relating to life or property in cases before the courts or other law tribunals. It can—and does—encompass situations before they reach the court as well as those situations following the court decision. It includes activities as varied as the following: courtroom testimony, child custody evaluations, research on screening and selection of law enforcement candidates, and clinical services to offenders and staff in correctional facilities. It also includes research and theory building in criminology; the design and implementation of intervention, prevention, and treatment for youth offenders; and counseling of victims of crime.

For organizational purposes, we divide forensic psychology into five subspecialties: (1) police and public safety psychology, (2) legal psychology, (3) psychology of crime and

delinquency, (4) victimology and victim services, and (5) correctional psychology. It should be emphasized, however, that this is for purposes of organizing the text and is not necessarily the organizational schema that is universally accepted in the field. Other scholars have adopted various methods of addressing the many ways psychology can interact with the law (e.g., Cutler & Zapf, 2015; Melton et al., 2018; Otto & Ogloff, 2014). Furthermore, we recognize and appreciate that some psychologists prefer to maintain a distinction between forensic psychology and other areas, such as correctional psychology (Magaletta et al., 2013) or police and public safety psychology (Brewster et al., 2016). This is addressed in more detail later.

Each of our subdivisions has both research and applied aspects, and psychologists conducting research in one area of forensic psychology may consult with or train practitioners in other areas. Finally, a forensic psychologist may operate in more than one of the above subspecialties. Although we separate them for organizational purposes, we do not intend to isolate them or suggest that they have little in common with one another. We discuss each subspecialty in more detail after briefly reviewing the history of the field.

BRIEF HISTORY OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Although the growth of forensic psychology has been especially apparent since the 1970s, its history can be traced back at least to the end of the 19th century, when J. McKeen Cattell conducted a very simple psychological experiment on eyewitness testimony in a psychology class at Columbia University. Cattell merely asked his students questions such as what the weather was like exactly a week before. Surprised at the wide variation in responses—often given with absolute certainty, even though they were wrong—Cattell decided to explore in greater depth and with more sophistication both memory and the field of eyewitness identification. Numerous psychologists subsequently undertook similar research. Some, for example, staged exercises wherein an “intruder” would enter the classroom, “confront” the professor, and leave. Students would then be asked to describe the intruder and the events that followed. To this day, both memory and eyewitness research remain of high interest to many forensic psychologists, yielding a rich store of information.

Psychologists also studied other topics that eventually produced knowledge of great value to the legal system. Research on human cognition, child development, abnormal behavior, the detection of deception, and stress are but a few examples. In the 20th century, such psychological knowledge gradually was introduced into legal proceedings in the form of expert testimony, first in civil courts and later, as the century wore on, in criminal courts (Bartol & Bartol, 2014; Otto, Kay, & Hess, 2014). In the early part of that century, psychologists also began to consult with juvenile courts and offer treatment services to juvenile and adult correctional facilities. By the start of World War II, psychologists like Lewis Terman had brought intelligence and aptitude testing to the military and some civilian law enforcement agencies. By mid-century, it was not unusual to see psychologists consulting formally with law enforcement agencies, particularly by offering services for the screening of candidates for police positions.

In the 1960s and 1970s, psychologists began to testify in courts in increasing numbers. They also joined other mental health professions in submitting *amicus curiae* briefs to appeals courts, offering scientific information about topics that reached the courts, such as the effects of discrimination or research on human development. They sometimes consulted with lawyers in trial preparation and jury selection, and they began to offer predictions of dangerousness under limited circumstances. Each of these areas of involvement are discussed in detail in the chapters ahead. **Focus 1.1** provides selected benchmarks in the history of forensic psychology.

FOCUS 1.1 SELECTED HISTORICAL BENCHMARKS PERTINENT TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

1893—First psychological experiment on the psychology of testimony is conducted by J. McKeen Cattell of Columbia University.

1903—Louis William Stern of Germany establishes a periodical dealing with the psychology of testimony (*Beiträge zur Psychologie der Aussage* [Contributions to the Psychology of Testimony])

1906—Publication of a little-known work, *Psychology Applied to Legal Evidence and Other Constructions of Law*, by George Frederick Arnold.

1908—Publication of Hugo Münsterberg's *On the Witness Stand*, arguably one of the first professional books on forensic psychology. Some scholars consider the author, a Harvard professor of psychology, to be the father of forensic psychology.

1908—Social science brief submitted to an appellate court, the Oregon Supreme Court, in *Muller v. Oregon*.

1909—Clinic for juvenile offenders established by psychologist Grace M. Fernald and psychiatrist William Healy.

1911—J. Varendonck becomes one of the earliest psychologists to testify in a criminal trial, held in Belgium.

1913—First time that psychological services are offered within a U.S. correctional facility (a women's reformatory in New York State), by psychologist Eleanor Rowland.

1917—Psychologist-lawyer William Marston develops the first "polygraph." Shortly thereafter, his expert testimony on the polygraph is rejected by a federal court (*Frye v. United States*, 1923) because the polygraph, as then developed, lacked general acceptance by the scientific community.

1917—Louis Terman becomes the first American psychologist to use psychological tests in the screening of law enforcement personnel.

1918—First inmate classification system developed by psychologists, established by the New Jersey

Department of Corrections. New Jersey also becomes the first state to hire full-time correctional psychologists on a regular basis.

1921—First time an American psychologist testifies in a courtroom as an expert witness (*State v. Driver*, 1921).

1922—Karl Marbe, a psychology professor at the University of Würzburg, Germany, becomes the first psychologist to testify at a civil trial.

1922—William Marston becomes the first to receive a faculty appointment in forensic psychology, as "professor of legal psychology" at American University.

1924—Wisconsin becomes the first state to provide comprehensive psychological examinations of all admissions to its prison system and all applications for parole.

1929—Psychologist Donald Slesinger is appointed associate professor at Yale Law School, qualifying him as the first psychologist granted faculty status in an American law school.

1931—Howard Burt's *Legal Psychology* is published—the first textbook in the forensic area written by a psychologist.

1954—U.S. Supreme Court cites social science research, including that of psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark, in its landmark ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

1961—Hans Toch edits one of the first texts on the psychology of crime, *Legal and Criminal Psychology*.

1962—Psychologists are recognized as experts on the issue of mental illness by D.C. Court of Appeals in *Jenkins v. United States*.

1964—Psychologist Hans J. Eysenck formulates a comprehensive and testable theory on criminal behavior in the book *Crime and Personality*.

1968—Martin Reiser, the first prominent full-time police psychologist in the United States, is hired by the Los Angeles Police Department. Reiser became

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instrumental in establishing police psychology as a profession.

1968—The first PsyD program is established at the University of Illinois.

1972—Under the guidance and leadership of the American Association for Correctional Psychology (AAPC), Stanley Brodsky, Robert Levinson, and Asher Pacht, correctional psychology becomes recognized as a professional career.

1973—The first successful interdisciplinary psychology and law program is developed at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

1977—*Law and Human Behavior*, the first peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to the interaction of psychology and law, begins publication.

1978—The American Board of Forensic Psychology provides board certification in forensic psychology.

1978—The American Psychological Association approves a clinical internship in corrections at the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

1985—The American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) recognizes forensic psychology as a specialty.

1991—The American Academy of Forensic Psychology and American Psychology–Law Society (Division 41 of the APA) publishes *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists*.

2001—The American Psychological Association recognizes forensic psychology as a specialty.

2006—The Committee on the Revision of the Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists recommends a broader definition that encompasses research as well as clinical practice.

2008—The American Psychological Association recertifies forensic psychology as a specialty.

2013—The *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* are published. Forensic psychology is described as “professional practice by any psychologist working within any subdiscipline of psychology (e.g., clinical, developmental, social, cognitive) when applying the scientific, technical, or specialized knowledge of psychology to the law to assist in addressing legal, contractual, and administrative matters.”

2013—Police and Public Safety Psychology (PPSP) is recognized by the American Psychological Association as a specialty.

In 1981, Loh observed that the relationship between psychology and law had come of age. Board certification in forensic psychology, provided by the American Board of Forensic Psychology, had begun in 1978 (Otto & Heilbrun, 2002). Shortly thereafter, the APA established Division 41, the American Psychology–Law Society (AP–LS), and that society was instrumental in prompting the APA to adopt forensic psychology guidelines in 1991 (subsequently revised in 2013). Meanwhile, the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) had recognized forensic psychology as a specialty in 1985. The APA added it to its list of specialties in 2001. In 2010, Heilbrun and Brooks noted that forensic psychology had matured. They observed that “we are closer to identifying best practices across a range of legal contexts that are addressed by forensic psychology research and practice” (p. 227). A year later, Packer and Grisso (2011) noted that forensic psychology was one of the most popular specialties among psychologists entering the workforce. The growth in the field is reflected in the development of professional organizations devoted to research and practice in forensic psychology, significant increases in the number of books and periodicals focusing on the topic, the development of undergraduate and graduate training programs, postdoctoral fellowships, and the establishment of standards for practitioners working in the discipline (DeMatteo et al., 2009; DeMatteo, Burl, Filone, & Heilbrun, 2016; Heilbrun & Brooks, 2010; Weiner & Otto, 2014).

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

Today, the practice of forensic psychology is evident in numerous contexts. Here are just a few examples of things that forensic psychologists may be asked to do, in addition to working in academic settings. Later in the chapter, and throughout the book, we discuss some of these tasks in more detail.

Police and Public Safety Psychology

- Assist police departments in determining optimal shift schedules for their employees.
- Establish reliable and valid screening procedures for public safety officer positions at various law enforcement, fire, first responder, fish and wildlife, police, and sheriff's departments.
- Perform fitness-for-duty evaluations of officers after a critical incident, such as a hostage-taking situation ending in multiple deaths.
- Train police officers on how to assist persons with mental illness.
- Provide counseling and debriefing services to officers after a shooting incident.
- Provide support services to the families of law enforcement officers.
- Inform police of the research evidence regarding the reliability of eyewitness identification and suggest ways of optimizing accurate memory of an event

Legal Psychology

- Conduct child custody evaluations, visitation risk assessments, and child abuse evaluations.
- Assist attorneys in jury selection through community surveys and other research methods.
- Perform evaluations of a defendant's competency to stand trial.
- Testify at a trial in which the defendant has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.
- Evaluate civil capacities, such as the capacity to make a will or consent to treatment.
- Submit briefs to appellate courts summarizing the research on adolescent brain development.
- Assess hardships suffered by individuals threatened with deportation during immigration proceedings.
- Consult with attorneys and other participants in military courts.

Psychology of Crime and Delinquency

- Evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies designed to prevent violent behavior during adolescence.
- Conduct research on the development of psychopathy.

- Consult with legislators and governmental agencies as a research policy advisor on responses to stalking.
- Consult with school personnel on identifying troubled youth who are a potential threat to other students.
- Develop a psychological measure for assessing risk of harm to self or others among persons with mental illness.

Victimology and Victim Services

- Help interview or evaluate persons who are the victims of crime or witnesses to crime.
- Conduct psychological assessments for personal injury matters related to auto accidents, product liability, sexual harassment and discrimination, medical negligence, worker's compensation, or disability.
- Educate and train victim service providers on psychological reactions to criminal victimization, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Conduct forensic assessments of victims of persecution and torture for evidence at immigration hearings.
- Assess, support, and counsel those who provide death notification services.
- Educate service providers on the impact of multiculturalism when victims seek mental health and support services.

Correctional Psychology

- Assess inmates entering jail or prison for both mental health needs and suitability for treatment and rehabilitation programs.
- Assess prisoners for risk in parole decision making.
- Assess violence risk in juveniles and adults.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs for juvenile and adult offenders, such as victim-offender reconciliation programs, sex offender treatment, violence prevention, or health education programs.
- Conduct sexually violent predator assessments.
- Establish reliable and valid screening procedures for correctional officer positions at correctional facilities.
- Offer mental health treatment to adults and juveniles in correctional settings.

The preceding list would be shortened considerably if we were to adopt a narrower, clinically based definition of forensic psychology or apply it only to contact with the court system. In addition to the previous list, forensic psychologists teach in colleges and universities and as mentioned earlier conduct research that is relevant to the legal system.

The work settings in which forensic psychologists are found include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Private practice
- Family, drug, and mental health courts
- Military courts and immigration courts
- Child protection agencies
- Victim services
- Domestic violence courts and programs
- Forensic mental health units (governmental or private)
- Sex offender treatment programs
- Correctional institutions (including research programs)
- Law enforcement agencies (federal, state, or local)
- Research organizations (governmental or private)
- Colleges and universities (teaching or research)
- Juvenile delinquency treatment programs
- Legal advocacy centers (e.g., for immigrants, prisoners, or persons with mental illness)

Throughout this book, text boxes in most of the chapters will introduce you to professionals who are engaged in these activities and work in these settings. Although their experiences are varied, a common theme is their willingness to pursue different and sometimes unexpected paths and opportunities, leading them to their present careers. See, for example, **Perspective 1.1** in which Dr. Sharon Kelley writes about her background, her research interests, and her collaborative work with forensic scientists in other fields.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY, FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY, AND FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK

Some of the tasks listed earlier are performed by mental health professionals who are not psychologists, most particularly psychiatrists or social workers. Increasingly, these three groups of professionals work in collaboration, but it is important to point out some of the differences among them.

Psychologists, particularly but not exclusively those with specialties in clinical, counseling, or forensic psychology, are often confused with psychiatrists by the public and the media. Today, the lines of separation between the two professions are becoming increasingly blurred. For example, clinical, counseling, and forensic psychologists, along with psychiatrists, all provide direct assessment and consulting services in many contexts (Neal & Grisso, 2014).

Psychiatrists are medical doctors (MDs; or, in some cases, doctors of osteopathy [DOs]), who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, addictive, and emotional disorders. Psychologists do not hold a medical degree, although some may have

earned related degrees, such as a master of public health (MPH). Another major distinction between the two has been the license to prescribe drugs, including psychoactive drugs. Traditionally, psychologists have not been permitted by law to prescribe any medication. Now, that is beginning to change. In 2002, New Mexico became the first state to allow properly trained psychologists to prescribe psychoactive drugs, or drugs intended to treat mental disorders or behavioral problems. In 2004, Louisiana became the second state to pass a law authorizing properly trained psychologists to prescribe certain medications for the treatment of mental health disorders. In that state, these practitioners are called “medical psychologists.” In 2014, Illinois enacted legislation granting prescriptive authority to psychologists who have training in psychopharmacology, and Iowa and Idaho enacted similar legislation in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Psychologists in Guam and in the military also have prescription privileges. Properly trained psychologists in the Department of Defense, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the Indian Health Service are able to prescribe (Robiner, Tompkins, & Hathaway, 2020). Medical associations typically have resisted extending prescription privileges, maintaining that this will lead to abuses and decrease the quality of patient care. Nevertheless, even among clinical psychologists there is not universal support for prescription privileges or authority, although early surveys found at least a majority in favor (e.g., Baird, 2007; Sammons, Gorny, Zinner, & Allen, 2000). However, as noted by Robiner, Tompkins, and Hathaway (2020, p. 1), “[t]here remains division within the profession and a paucity of data regarding competencies, prescribing practices, and outcomes.”

Many psychiatrists, like psychologists, work in a variety of forensic settings, including the court, correctional facilities, and law enforcement, but especially the first. Psychiatrists who are closely associated with the law are often referred to as **forensic psychiatrists**. In some areas, such as issues relating to insanity determination by the courts, psychiatrists are more visible—and sometimes more preferred—than psychologists. As we discuss in a later chapter, this reflects a greater comfort on the part of some judges with the medical model approach to mental disorder (Melton et al., 2018). Nonetheless, research indicates that report quality is comparable between forensic psychologists and forensic psychiatrists across settings and types of evaluations (Pillay, Gowensmith, & Banks, 2019). In Canada, psychiatrists perform the majority of both fitness to stand trial and criminal responsibility (Roesch et al., 2019). Roesch et al. (2019) argue persuasively for a change in Canada’s criminal code that would facilitate psychology’s entry into this service.

In the United States and other countries, psychologists routinely carry out these pretrial evaluations. Psychologists and psychiatrists seem to be equally involved in pretrial assessments of juveniles, while psychologists are more likely to conduct custody evaluations, consult with law enforcement, and work within the correctional system. Forensic neuropsychologists, who have expertise in brain research, assessments, and the law, are frequently consulted in both criminal and civil matters. Law-related research tends to be the bailiwick of psychologists, although some psychiatrists are also engaged in conducting and publishing such research.

Forensic social workers also can be found in the same arenas as their psychological and psychiatric counterparts. They may counsel victims of crimes or families of victims and offenders and provide substance abuse and sex offender treatment to offenders, among other functions. In many correctional facilities, social workers are part of the treatment team. Forensic social workers may be found participating in child custody evaluations, termination of parental rights, spousal abuse cases, and juvenile justice and adult corrections.

Forensic social work is the application of social work principles to questions and issues relating to law and legal systems. A professional group, the National Organization

of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW), publishes the *Journal of Forensic Social Work*, which addresses contemporary forensic practice issues for practitioners and social researchers. Although some have doctoral degrees, forensic social workers typically possess a master's degree in social work (MSW) with a forensic concentration and supervised field experience. In most states, they are not recognized as experts in criminal cases but do testify in civil cases.

In all areas of forensic work, collaboration among professionals is crucial. Therefore, although our text focuses on the work of psychologists, it is important to stress that contributions from other mental health professionals cannot be overlooked and that the disciplines often work in collaboration.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE 1.1

Blending Psychology, Law, Research, and Friendships

Sharon Kelley, PhD, JD



Sharon Kelley

I have always been curious about the law and the people who violate it. Curiosity about the law runs in my family—both of my grandfathers were lawyers and my parents inherited a keen ability to parse language and develop arguments on both sides of an issue.

When I discovered the field of psychology during high school, I finally had a lens to understand and explore these interests.

I am also an animal lover and equestrian, and these passions blended easily with psychology. Try training a dog or a horse without basic principles of reinforcement. My horse, Jack, tested these principles: The first time I saw him, it took five people just to maneuver him into a stall. Jack taxed my patience and terrified me. At one point, I was ready to quit when a wise trainer helped me connect the dots between Jack's physical scars (there were several) and problem behaviors (there were . . . more than several). I resumed training with enthusiasm brought about by a new perspective. In a way, Jack was my first client and one of my best teachers; over time, his demeanor improved and he became a favorite for children's "pony rides."

As soon as I started at St. Mary's College of Maryland, I had my eye on the upper level "Psychology

and the Law" course. The class opened my eyes to the research of leaders in the field, like Elizabeth Loftus's work on eyewitness misidentifications and Saul Kassin's research on false confessions, topics you will learn about in this book. More broadly, I learned about the role of psychologists in studying the legal system and evaluating parties in legal proceedings. I was hooked. Senior year I settled on a thesis exploring false confessions and found my way into the maze of Constitutional law surrounding interrogations and confessions. I recall my good friend shooting me odd looks as I skipped social gatherings to read lengthy law review articles about *Miranda v. Arizona*. Constitutional law courses complemented my research, which culminated with interviews of police officers from surrounding jurisdictions.

I graduated from college without plans or job offers. I knew I wanted to do *something* with psychology, but my experiences with legal research created a fork in the road: graduate school or law school? I looked for internships that would clarify matters and found a (modestly) paid internship at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C. (Tip: When you're uncertain, take a step forward. No matter what, you'll learn something.) The Bazelon Center only cemented my passion for both psychology and law, and I naively applied to the four JD/PhD programs in existence at the time (Tip: In the world of PhD programs and law schools, apply to more than four graduate schools.)

(Continued)

(Continued)

I was offered a position in the JD/PhD program at Villanova University School of Law and Drexel University, a program now housed entirely at Drexel University. I was delighted to enter a lab under the mentorship of Naomi Goldstein, a national expert on *Miranda* rights and justice-involved youth. Through graduate school, I worked in several clinical settings: a prison, a primary care practice, juvenile justice facilities, and a psychiatric hospital. By far my favorite was the forensic assessment clinic. That year introduced me to forensic evaluations and the work of making a defendant's history and psychology understandable to lawyers and judges.

Graduate school was both psychology graduate school and law school. I loved my legal internships at the Juvenile Law Center and the local Capital Habeas Unit (which handles appeals of death penalty cases). But the study of law is very different from the practice of law, and I grew increasingly confident that my future career would be in forensic psychology, with law serving as a happy accompaniment.

After completing my degrees, I accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Virginia Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy (ILPPP), where I now remain. The fellowship provided exceptional, in-depth training in forensic evaluations of all varieties. It also provided a small slice of time to decide what my "grown-up" research agenda would look like.

That year, my research agenda evolved in a way I never anticipated: I was given an opportunity to join a federally funded center devoted to improving the broad forensic sciences. The center was created following mounting evidence that many of the forensic sciences (e.g., fingerprint comparisons, ballistics) were underresearched and vulnerable to cognitive biases. Although this was outside my wheelhouse, I jumped at the opportunity. (Tip: Don't be afraid to expand your wheelhouse,

particularly when you have the support of good mentors and colleagues and the opportunity to work across disciplines.) Thus, for the past 5 years, I have been working with crime labs, statisticians, and other psychologists to improve forensic science disciplines.

ILPPP also gave me an opportunity to pursue my core research interests: Defendants' rights, abilities, and experiences as they navigate the legal system. At ILPPP, I reconnected with a graduate school friend and colleague, Heather Zelle. Together, we formed a research lab that explores questions raised by local legislators and stakeholders in the mental health system as well as research questions of our own. We had previously collaborated on research related to *Miranda* comprehension, and we have continued researching and writing on the topic. More recently, born out of a pattern colleagues and I saw in some of our forensic evaluations, we began to research police interactions with people with mental illness. (Tip: Allow your clinical work to inform your research and vice versa.) We were particularly frustrated by occasions where police were called because of a psychiatric crisis, and the individual in crisis received charges as a result of the encounter (e.g., assault and battery on a law enforcement officer).

I have worked with other friends and colleagues, including others I met in graduate school, on many topics of mutual interest. (Tip: Work with your friends when you can; it's a unique pleasure.)

I currently have the "blended" career I always aspired to: I conduct forensic evaluations with great colleagues and trainees, I'm actively involved in several lines of research, and I teach classes (primarily Forensic Psychology) at James Madison University. (Tip: I could never have planned this exact path. Stay open to opportunity and don't be afraid to shift directions.)

As noted, Dr. Kelley is a clinical forensic psychologist at the University of Virginia's (UVA's) Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy. She is an assistant professor of psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences in the UVA School of Medicine and an adjunct instructor at James Madison University. Outside work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, dog, and cat; reading; visiting local wineries; and leisurely walks with Jack, her childhood horse, who has retired to a nearby farm.

ETHICAL ISSUES

With the increasing opportunities available to forensic psychologists, numerous pragmatic and ethical issues also have been raised. Prescription authority, mentioned briefly above, is one example. Other ethical issues pertain to the dual relationships between the psychologist and the client, conflicts of interest, bias, participation in research, issues of confidentiality,

and the tension between punishment and rehabilitation (A. Day & Casey, 2009; Murrie & Boccaccini, 2015; Neal & Brodsky, 2016; Ward & Birgden, 2009; Weiner & Hess, 2014). In recent years, contentious issues have revolved around psychologists participating in military interrogations, making recommendations in child custody cases, conducting violence risk assessments in death penalty cases, labeling juveniles as psychopathic, and establishing proper boundaries between assessment and treatment. A growing field of practice, working with undocumented immigrants subject to deportation proceedings or immigrants victimized by crime, carries with it many ethical implications, including culturally rooted misunderstandings and the applicability of psychological measures to diverse groups (Filone & King, 2015).

Like all psychologists, forensic psychologists are expected to practice in accordance with the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (APA, 2010a), which includes five general principles and ten standards. The latter are mandatory rules that psychologists are obliged to follow. In addition, the aforementioned *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* (APA, 2013c), as well as a variety of other guidelines published by the American Psychological Association, should be consulted. We will visit these guidelines as they relate to material in the chapters ahead.

CAREERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Since the 1970s, there has been an enormous expansion of the profession of psychology in general (Reed, Levant, Stout, Murphy, & Phelps, 2001) as well as forensic psychology specifically (Packer & Borum, 2013). Psychology encompasses a wide spectrum of topics ranging from engineering designs (human factors) to animal behavior, and it has a place in every imaginable setting. Psychologists can be found in “personnel selection and training, developing user-friendly computer software, the delivery of psychological services to victims of natural and man-made disasters, the profiling of serial killers, the creation of effective commercials that increase the sale of a product, and so on” (Ballie, 2001, p. 25).

In 2017, there were 117,371 members of the **American Psychological Association (APA)** (Winerman, 2017). This includes 32,527 student affiliates, 20,202 life status members, 3,987 international associates, and 3,978 community college or high school teacher associates. The APA, based in Washington, D.C., is the largest association of psychologists worldwide.

As of 2019, approximately 35,000 psychologists from the United States and abroad, whose specialties span the entire spectrum of scientific, applied, and teaching areas, were members of the **Association for Psychological Science (APS)** (www.psychologicalscience.org), the second-largest psychological organization in the United States. The APS, also based in Washington, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of scientific psychology. In addition to the APA and APS, psychologists belong to many other professional organizations at the international, national, state, and local levels. In Canada, for example, there are approximately 7,000 members of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). It should be noted that the CPA groups psychologists who work in a variety of criminal justice and forensic psychology settings into a category called criminal justice psychology. This category includes corrections, law enforcement, the courts, hospitals, community mental health, and academic settings. In the United Kingdom, the British Psychological Society (BPS) had approximately 60,000 members and subscribers in 2019.

Education and Training

The number of colleges and universities that offer at least one undergraduate course in forensic psychology has grown rapidly in the United States, and many of these courses tend to

be very popular (DeMatteo et al., 2016). They attract many students, whether or not they are interested in a career in psychology. This may apply to you, the reader. Criminal justice majors, sociology and social work majors, and political science majors often enroll in forensic psychology classes. A similar pattern exists in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia (Helmus, Babchishin, Camilleri, & Olver, 2011; Pillay et al., 2019). Most recently, Pillay, Gowensmith, and Banks wrote about developing forensic psychology training programs in South Africa. While many colleges and universities offer undergraduate courses in forensic psychology or psychology and law, very few offer specific majors or concentrations in the field at the undergraduate level.

Students who are interested in psychology as a career become quickly aware that the bachelor's degree provides a basic foundation in psychology, but it does not adequately prepare a person to be a professional psychologist. The minimum educational requirement for psychologists is the master's degree, but students are encouraged to pursue doctoral-level training when possible. In some states, graduates of master's degree programs in psychology—with the appropriate clinical training—may be eligible for licensure as a psychological associate (LPA) or as a masters-level psychologist (MacKain, Tedeschi, Durham, & Goldman, 2002). The most common master's degrees in psychology are in clinical, counseling, or I/O psychology.

In recent years, master's-level psychologists have gained ground as practitioners, however. The APA does not discourage master's-level psychologists with degrees from accredited university programs to practice independently. This wider recognition was controversial and roundly criticized by some psychologists with more advanced degrees and broader training (N. Cummings & Cummings, 2018). Interestingly, the criticisms focus less on the need for advanced research and scientific training than on the fear that psychology's clinical orientation and mental health practice are undervalued when lesser trained practitioners are recognized. Debates such as this are not likely to be resolved in the near future.

In addition to course work at the undergraduate and master's level, various types of internships provide students with valuable opportunities to learn more about the field. As you read through this text, you may note that quite a few of the essayists featured in the Perspectives boxes mention internships during their undergraduate or early graduate years. As they pursued doctoral-level training, the internships became more advanced and involved additional responsibilities. In addition, specialization in psychology usually begins at the graduate or even postgraduate level, although many undergraduate programs offer concentrations in certain areas, such as social psychology, educational psychology, forensic psychology, or human development. Graduate programs in psychology usually offer graduate degrees in experimental, biopsychology, developmental, cognitive, clinical, counseling, school, and industrial/organizational psychology. The last four represent the more applied or practitioner's side of psychology. In 2001, forensic psychology was recognized as another applied branch or specialty in the field, and in 2013, police and public safety psychology was recognized as still another specialty.

Graduate Training, Doctoral Level

At the doctoral level, clinical psychology attracts the largest number of students of all the applied specialties. A doctorate has long been considered the entry-level credential for the independent practice of psychology (Michalski, Kohout, Wicherski, & Hart, 2011). As noted, though, master's-level psychologists have made some gains at being capable of independent practice.

The PhD degree (doctor of philosophy) requires a dissertation and is well accepted in the academic world as appropriate preparation for scientists and scholars in many fields

across the globe (Donn, Routh, & Lunt, 2000). It is regarded primarily as a research-based degree. A dissertation refers to a substantial paper based on the PhD candidate's original research, which should make a significant contribution to the research literature.

The PsyD (doctor of psychology) is a graduate degree designed primarily for students who wish to become practitioners or clinicians rather than researchers. The first PsyD program was established in 1968 at the University of Illinois (D. Peterson, 1968). Although many PhD psychologists have questioned the soundness of the PsyD since its beginnings, especially in light of its limited research focus, the degree has received increasing professional recognition in recent years and has attracted the interest of many students, especially those drawn to the intensive clinical focus of the PsyD programs. In summary, PsyD programs usually place strong emphasis on clinical training, while PhD programs place strong emphasis on understanding and engaging in scientific research. The line of demarcation between these degrees is somewhat blurred, however. Many psychologists who hold the PhD have also had clinical internships, and those who hold the PsyD have some research training. In summary, obtaining either a PhD or a PsyD requires motivation and persistence, but as many essayists throughout this book indicate, it is well worth the toil. All requirements of the doctorate can usually be completed in 4 to 6 years (of full-time study beyond the undergraduate degree). If an internship is required, it usually takes a year or longer to complete the degree. The internship setting for students interested in forensic psychology can be at sites that provide a forensic experience, such as court clinics, forensic hospitals, or assessment centers. Forensic experiences in predoctoral internship programs are becoming increasingly common (Krauss & Sales, 2014).

Licensure

According to Tucillo, DeFilippis, Denny, and Dsurney (2002), by 1977, every U.S. state had laws relating to the licensure of psychologists, and in 1990, all Canadian provinces regulated the practice of psychology. In 1987, in an effort to encourage standardized licensing requirements, the APA developed a model act to serve as a prototype for drafting state legislation (Tucillo et al., 2002). One of the chief criteria to qualify for licensing is possession of the doctoral degree. In 2014, approximately 106,500 psychologists in the United States possessed current licenses (APA, 2014a). Professional psychologists are also ethically obligated to comply with the standards pertaining to their practice, as outlined by the **“Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (EPPCC)** (APA, 2002, 2010a).

Guidelines are also offered in a number of areas associated with research and clinical practice. A good example is the *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* (SGFP; APA, 2013c) mentioned earlier. One distinction between standards and guidelines should be made. Psychologists are expected to comply with *standards*, and there is an enforcement mechanism in place in case they do not. For example, a violation of the standards outlined in the Code of Conduct could result in a complaint to the APA's Professional Conduct Board or a state's licensing board and, ultimately, loss of one's license to practice psychology. By contrast, the *guidelines* are aspirational; psychologists are strongly encouraged—but not required—to abide by them. However, the various guidelines offered to psychologists are extremely helpful to those working in clinical as well as research settings.

Employment

Surveys are periodically done to determine where psychologists with recent doctorates find employment. One such survey (D. Smith, 2002) found that about three quarters were employed in higher education or human service settings (such as schools or hospitals). The

rest were working in business, government, or private practice. About 25% of those with new doctorates found employment in academic positions at 4-year colleges and universities. Morgan, Kuther, and Habben (2005) edited an interesting book in which new doctorates in psychology wrote about the rewards and challenges they faced at the entry level of their careers. Kuther and Morgan (2013) also published a work reviewing careers in psychology in a changing world. Another very helpful book is *Career Paths in Psychology: Where Your Degree Can Take You*, edited by Robert J. Sternberg (2017).

A survey conducted by the AP-LS (P. Griffin, 2011), one specifically related to forensic psychology, found that independent practice was the primary work setting of psychologists involved in psychology and law activities. Approximately 45% identified independent practice (e.g., conducting child custody evaluations or risk assessments) as their main setting. Another 25% worked primarily in university settings, 12% in hospital or other human service settings, and approximately 10% in government settings. It should be noted that, although psychologists will have a primary setting, many also overlap their work into other settings—as you will again find as you read the essays in this book. For example, a number of psychologists whose primary setting is a college or university also maintain private practices. Those with doctorates in psychology have a strong foundation in theory, research methodology, and analysis that allows them to work in a variety of occupations. “Rather than being stereotyped as a professor or therapist, more and more psychologists are being seen as applied scientists” (Ballie, 2001, p. 25).

The Applied Specialties

After obtaining their doctoral degrees, many psychologists, including forensic psychologists, obtain postdoctoral training in a specialty area for one or two years (Kopelovich, Piel, Michaelson, Reynolds, & Cowley, 2019). With or without postdoctoral training, many seek to be certified as professionals in one of a number of areas of practice. Such certification typically follows years of experience as well as a demonstrated expertise. At present, 15 specialties of professional psychology have been recognized by the American Psychological Association (see Table 1.1). Other groups, such as the ABPP, recognize specialties as well. As should be apparent from **Table 1.1**, there can be considerable overlap in the knowledge and skills associated with various specialties, and many specialties are pertinent to forensic psychology, which is its own separate specialty. For example, specialists in clinical child psychology, family psychology, and clinical neuropsychology all may make contributions in the forensic realm. Thus, although these specialties may have distinct features, journals, newsletters, meetings, associations, and interests, they also have many things in common.

In all these practices, many psychologists find that their clients are often from cultural backgrounds, races, and ethnicities different from their own. Fortunately, this is changing as service providers themselves are more diverse. Although members of racial or ethnic minority groups accounted for less than one fifth of the psychology workforce in 2013, the profession has become more diverse, with the proportion of minority group representation growing from 8.9% to 16.4% in the early 21st century (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2015). It should be noted, as well, that the APA has a fellowship program that provides assistance to members of various underrepresented cultural groups to further their professional goals as well as serve diverse communities. Thus psychologists not only are encountering in their practices more persons of Latino, Asian, Native American, and Middle Eastern heritage, but they are themselves also reflecting multicultural groups.

Table 1.1 Specialties in Professional Psychology and Year of Initial Recognition by the APA

| | |
|--|------|
| Clinical Neuropsychology | 1996 |
| Industrial/Organizational Psychology | 1996 |
| Clinical Health Psychology | 1997 |
| School Psychology | 1998 |
| Clinical Psychology | 1998 |
| Clinical Child Psychology | 1998 |
| Counseling Psychology | 1998 |
| Psychoanalysis in Psychology | 1998 |
| Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology | 2000 |
| Forensic Psychology | 2001 |
| Couple and Family Psychology | 2002 |
| Geropsychology | 2010 |
| Police and Public Safety Psychology | 2013 |
| Sleep Psychology | 2013 |
| Rehabilitation Psychology | 2015 |
| Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy | 2018 |
| Serious Mental Illness Psychology | 2019 |

In recognition of the need to be aware of diversity and a changing society, various guidelines have been adopted in recent years (e.g., APA, 2003b, 2012).

Also in recent years, psychologists and other mental health professionals have become attuned to realities facing immigrant populations. Interestingly, the immigrant population in the United States has been characterized as being at the highest and lowest ends of the educational and skills continuum (APA, 2012). Though it seems problematic to minimize “skills” in this way, the APA was noting that immigrants represent 25% of physicians and 47% of scientists with doctorates in the United States; they also gather in the agricultural, service, farm, and construction industries—all of which require important skills. As became very clear in the pandemic of 2020, immigrants often are the frontline workers who attend to the critically ill, provide transportation, deliver food, and offer a multitude of support services, including child care and home health care to persons who are isolated.

Like all people, immigrants may experience anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, or serious mental illness. In addition, the 21st century became a time when many are viewed with suspicion, targeted for selective prosecution, subjected to hate crimes, and—for those undocumented—separated from families or threatened with deportation. Many fear for the safety of relatives and friends facing persecution or violence in another country.

Since the turn of the century, psychologists involved in assessing or treating members of immigrant groups have reported numerous issues in both adults and children, ranging from post-traumatic stress, anxiety disorders, language barriers, and problems with acculturation. Immigrants who are undocumented often fear reporting victimization—such as domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking—so as not to bring attention to themselves. There are also social and cultural barriers to seeking mental health services. Many psychological assessment tools (e.g., certain standardized tests) were not normed on these groups and thereby lack reliability (APA, 2012). Finally, psychologists who are not themselves recent immigrants must be attuned to the possibility that they are subject to a negative worldview about immigrants that they have derived from political figures and media (Bemak & Chi-Ying Chung, 2014). We will return to some of these topics in later chapters.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY AS A SPECIALTY

Education and Training Requirements

Regardless of the debate over how broadly or narrowly forensic psychology should be defined, the growth in the field is demonstrated by the continuing development of graduate programs and postdoctoral fellowships throughout the world, particularly in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. As of 2017, there were about 80 forensic psychology graduate programs, at both the MA and PhD or PsyD levels across the globe. Some were campus based and others were online programs. In the United States and Canada alone, it is estimated that 41 institutions offer 68 programs in forensic psychology, “including 15 clinical PhD programs, 10 PsyD programs, 15 nonclinical PhD programs, 12 joint-degree programs . . . and 16 master’s programs” (Burl, Shah, Filone, Foster, & DeMatteo, 2012, p. 49). (See **Table 1.2** for a list of graduate programs in the United States.) In addition, there are 25 existing forensic psychology postdoctoral fellowships in the United States (Kopelovich et al., 2019).

One interesting path is that taken by individuals who pursue joint-degree training—they earn both a PhD and a Juris Doctor degree in law (JD) at the same or associated institution. Some decide on a PhD and a master’s degree in legal studies (MLS). The joint degree, though not necessary for forensic psychologists, is a good option for graduate students feeling a strong pull toward both psychology and law (DeMatteo, 2019). Several of the essayists featured in this textbook hold joint degrees. It is a mistake to believe you need a degree specifically in forensic psychology to work in the field, however. Many graduate programs in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and criminal justice, among others, have forensic concentrations that provide students with academic and training opportunities in forensic psychology, whether through specific course work or internships. Furthermore, many psychologists recommend a broad background in psychology, such as would be obtained by a clinical or counseling degree, rather than a degree in forensic psychology. Also, as noted earlier, postdoctoral fellowship opportunities are available as well. The choice one makes can depend upon numerous factors: the availability of a mentor, the content of courses offered, the opportunity for internships, funding, the geographic area, and the reputation of the program, among many considerations. In reality, there are different avenues through which to work in forensic psychology.

Most of the graduate programs in the United States concentrate on either clinical or counseling psychology or on social psychology as it relates to legal psychology or psychology and law. DeMatteo et al. (2009) recommended that doctoral level training in forensic psychology should have seven components, and this model is often taken as the guideline for curriculum development (see **Table 1.3**). Formal programs offering specific degrees

Table 1.2 Colleges and Universities Offering Graduate Programs in Forensic and/or Legal Psychology

| | |
|--|--|
| Programs Offering a PhD | University of Alabama, University of Arizona, University of California–Irvine, Drexel University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Florida International University, Fordham University, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, University of Massachusetts–Lowell, University of Nevada–Reno, University of North Texas, University of Texas–El Paso, Nova Southeastern University, Palo Alto University, Sam Houston State University, Simon Fraser University, Texas A & M University, Texas Tech University, University of Wyoming, West Virginia University |
| Programs Offering a PsyD | Nova Southeastern University, Pacific University School of Professional Psychology, Spalding University, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, William James College, Widener University |
| Programs Offering Joint Degrees in Psychology and Law or Legal Studies | Arizona State University, Cornell University, Drexel University, Palo Alto University, University of California–Irvine, University of Florida, University of Minnesota, University of Nebraska–Lincoln. |
| Programs Offering a Master's Degree | America International College, Adler School of Professional Psychology, California State University, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, College of Saint Elizabeth, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Holy Names University, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Marymount University, Nova Southeastern University, Palo Alto University, Roger Williams University, The Sage Colleges, University of California–Irvine, University of Colorado–Colorado Springs, University of Denver, University of Houston–Victoria, University of Leicester, University of Nevada– Reno, University of North Dakota, William James College. |

Source: Created using data from *Guide to Graduate Programs in Forensic and Legal Psychology 2016–2017*, developed in collaboration with the Teaching, Training, and Careers Committee of the American Psychology–Law Society, Division 41 of the American Psychological Association. Updated by Apryl Alexander, PsyD, University of Denver.

Table 1.3 Recommended Components for Doctoral-Level Forensic Psychology Training Programs

| |
|--|
| Substantive psychology |
| Research design/methodology and statistics |
| Conducting research, in preparation for doctoral dissertation or thesis |
| Legal knowledge |
| Law–psychology knowledge (e.g., scientific testimony, assessment measures, treatment of offenders) |
| Ethics and professional issues |
| Clinical-forensic training in supervised practice settings |

Source: Adapted from DeMatteo et al. (2009).

in police psychology are virtually nonexistent in the United States and Canada, although there are several programs called “investigative psychology” in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, now that police and public safety psychology has been recognized as a specialty, it is likely that more academic concentrations in this area will be developed.

In anticipation of this happening, the Council of Organizations in Police Psychology (COPP) has proposed educational and training guidelines (Brewster et al., 2016), which will be mentioned again in Chapter 2. Academic and research institutions in Canada have long supported research in correctional psychology, and the curricula in Canadian forensic programs reflect this strong research or empirical emphasis. Interestingly, forensic programs in the United States have been slow in giving sufficient attention to corrections and the skills needed to practice in that area (Magaletta et al., 2013). On the other hand, it is also argued that generalist skills are more helpful to practice in corrections than specialized skills, at least for the time being (Magaletta et al., 2013; Magaletta & Patry, 2020). In both the United States and Canada, however, more aggressive efforts are now made to recruit graduate students into practica that will be of benefit to both their future careers and the institutions they serve during these internship experiences (Magaletta, Patry, Cermak, & McLearn, 2017; Olver, Preston, Camilleri, Helmus, & Starzomski, 2011). It is important to mention, also, that students with psychology backgrounds often enroll in doctoral programs that confer degrees in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, and social work. Professors, practitioners, and researchers who teach in these programs make significant contributions to this field. Moreover, these graduate programs often include PhD or PsyD psychologists on their faculty.

In approximately 17 states, forensic psychologists must obtain licenses or state-issued certificates in order to engage in forensic practice, such as conducting competency evaluations for the courts or assessing sexually violent offenders who may be subjected to civil commitment proceedings. Virtually all of the laws relating to certification in various states were passed after 2000, which is testament to the growth in this field. Heilbrun and Brooks (2010) have published a helpful table summarizing these statutes.

Another level of certification is “board certification,” which can add stature to the credentials of individuals who are called to testify in court. On a national level, the predominant organization that provides board certification in forensic psychology (as well as other specialty areas) is the ABPP. In addition, the American Board of Forensic Psychology (ABFP) has provided board certification since 1978 and is now affiliated with the ABPP (Heilbrun & Brooks, 2010). Another certifying body is the American Board of Psychological Specialties (ABPS), which is affiliated with the American College of Forensic Examiners (ACFE). Criteria used by the various boards and organizations to grant credentials or titles vary widely (Otto & Heilbrun, 2002). According to Heilbrun and Brooks (2010), with regard to board certification, the ABFP “appears to be the most rigorous, requiring a credentials review, a work sample review, and the passing of both a written and an oral examination for all candidates” (p. 229).

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE CAREERS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

We now discuss briefly the five major areas in the research and practice of forensic psychology to be covered throughout the text, along with two related “subareas,” family forensic and forensic school psychology. Although examples of what psychologists do in each of these areas were listed earlier in the chapter, this section offers additional details.

Police and Public Safety Psychology

Police and public safety psychology (PPSP) is the research and application of psychological principles and clinical skills to law enforcement and public safety (Bartol, 1996). The goal

of this specialty is to assist law enforcement and other public safety personnel and agencies in carrying out their mission and societal functions with effectiveness and safety. Psychologists who work in law enforcement and public safety are involved in the following four areas: (1) assessment (e.g., screening and selection of personnel, fitness-for-duty evaluations [FFDEs] and special unit evaluations); (2) clinical intervention (post-shooting incidents, line-of-duty deaths counseling, deep undercover stress reactions); (3) operational support (e.g., hostage negotiation, criminal activity analyses); and (4) organization consultation (e.g., gender issues and issues related to racial or ethnic minorities, excessive force concerns, police corruption problems, workplace stressors).

Police psychologists are sometimes left out of the umbrella category of forensic psychologist, and as noted earlier, some do not consider themselves such. This field also has grown dramatically, embracing a number of national organizations, and it has achieved APA recognition as a specialty of its own. However, because of the overlap between forensic and police psychology specialties, we continue to treat it as a branch of forensic psychology for organizational purposes.

In the early years, the term *police psychology* was used, but this has given way to the broader term, which encompasses the many professions that are associated with public safety concerns, such as deputy sheriffs, fish and wildlife agents, airport security, immigration agents, marshals, constables, and many other types of state and federal agents. It also includes military personnel and private contractors. In addition, the broader terminology is a reminder that police exist not only to arrest people but also to serve and protect the public at large.

Scholars often mark the beginning of the psychology and police relationship at 1917, when Lewis Terman began testing applicants for police positions (Brewster et al., 2016). The relationship between psychology and law enforcement has waxed and waned over the years, though, with considerable forensic psychology involvement—such as in candidate screening—followed by a period of quiescence. The police community has been characterized as “tight-knit, paramilitary, and rigid and . . . not given to innovation” (Scrivner, Corey, & Greene, 2014, p. 444). Scrivner, Corey, and Greene add that “[i]nitially, the tradition-clad agencies were uncertain about the need for psychological services, and psychologists had an uphill battle to gain credibility and develop an understanding of the law enforcement culture.” Overall, though, as law enforcement agencies have become more professional and psychologists more appreciative of the demands of law enforcement work, relations between the two professions have improved and become mutually respectful. “There is little question today that psychologists have made a difference and have had an impact on the delivery of law enforcement services across the country” (Scrivner et al., 2014, p. 444).

Nevertheless, the relationship between police and the public is complicated. In the 21st century, highly publicized deaths of unarmed Blacks brought to the forefront major concerns about systemic racism in police agencies across the United States. Examples of excessive force used against civilians, even over the past decade, are not difficult to find, and we mention here only a few. In March 2020, Breonna Taylor was fatally shot in her home by police executing a no-knock search warrant for which she was not the subject. In May 2020, the world saw images of an officer holding his knee on George Floyd’s neck for almost 9 minutes while he lay facedown, unable to breathe. After Floyd died, people across the United States—and sometimes across the world—held peaceful marches to protest police brutality. Some states, and some local communities, immediately changed law enforcement policies relating to force and to police–civilian interactions. Then, an unarmed Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back while getting into his car by a police officer holding on to his shirt. Blake’s three young sons were in the car. We address more details about these incidents in later chapters. For the present, it is stressed that police

responses to people of color is something police and public safety psychologists cannot ignore in their interactions with law enforcement.

Police and public safety psychologists will continue to perform routine duties, including preemployment psychological assessments, fitness-for-duty evaluations, special unit evaluations, hostage team negotiations, and deadly force incident evaluations. In light of recent events, routine duties will be carried out against a backdrop of increasing distrust from many in the public who support police but also recognize that numerous problems must be addressed. As of 2016, for example, 98.5% of all law enforcement agencies used psychologists to evaluate the psychological suitability of persons to perform the functions required of a police officer before they were hired (Corey, 2017). As we note in the following chapter, perhaps it is time to demand that closer attention be paid to assessing the attitudes of candidates who may end up in positions of authority, whether patrolling streets or transmitting messages to those they supervise.

Psychologists also may be asked to do investigative-type activities, such as criminal profiling, psychological autopsies, handwriting analysis, and eyewitness (or earwitness) hypnosis. “Cop docs,” as they are sometimes called, also provide support services to officers and their families. Larger police departments usually hire full-time, in-house police psychologists, whereas the smaller departments typically use psychological consultants.

Currently, there are no formal graduate programs in the United States specifically focused on police and public safety psychology, but as mentioned earlier, with recent recognition as a specialty, this may happen soon. It is best for students entering the field to earn a doctorate in psychology and, while in the graduate program, to work with a faculty member who is involved in police psychology and has worked with the law enforcement community if possible. It is also advisable to complete a doctoral or postdoctoral internship in an agency or organization that deals directly with police organizations. Regardless of the career path taken, it is critical that a person interested in police psychology become highly familiar with the nature of police work, its policies and procedures, and gain an understanding of law enforcement culture, which we discuss in more detail in the following chapter.

Legal Psychology

Legal psychology is an umbrella term for the scientific study of a wide assortment of topics reflecting the close relationship between psychology and the law, particularly but not exclusively the courts. These topics include—but again are not limited to—comprehension of one’s legal rights, criminal responsibility (insanity defense), civil commitment, jury selection, jury and judicial decision making, child custody determinations, family law issues, eyewitness identification, and the effects of pretrial publicity on court proceedings. As treated here, legal psychology includes both research and application of behavioral and social science to criminal and civil courts.

Once they have earned their PhD or PsyD degree (or a joint JD/PhD), people with a background in legal psychology often go directly into academe or private practice, or they obtain postdoctoral positions in various agencies and research facilities like the Federal Judicial Center, the National Center for State Courts, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National Institute of Justice, or the National Institute of Mental Health.

A caveat is in order, however. It is not unusual to see the terms *legal psychology*, *psychology and law*, and *forensic psychology* used interchangeably in academic and professional literature. Although we use *legal psychology* here as a subarea of forensic psychology, we recognize that this is not a universal approach. We also recognize the considerable overlap between legal psychology and the other subareas we have carved out. The subareas are not mutually

exclusive. Eyewitness identification, for example, a rich research area for legal psychology, is of intense interest to police and public safety psychologists, who might be advising the law enforcement community on lineup procedures or the reliability of eyewitness testimony. In fact, we discuss these topics in Chapter 3, which deals with police investigative procedures. The legal psychologist is more likely than the police and public safety psychologist to be conducting *research* in these areas, however.

One of the numerous topics holding considerable interest for legal psychologists is the psychology of false confessions, a topic we also discuss in Chapter 3. Most people are aware that suspects—for a wide variety of reasons—sometimes confess to crimes they did not commit. Suspects may be afraid, may be coerced into confessing, may desire to protect the real perpetrator, may think that no one will believe in their innocence, or may even want the notoriety associated with being blamed for the crime. What surprises many people, however, is this: Some suspects who are truly innocent come to believe they are truly guilty. Research strongly suggests that skillful manipulation by law enforcement officers can lead to this form of false confession (Kassin, 1997, 2008; Kassin, Goldstein, & Savitsky, 2003; Kassin & Kiechel, 1996; Loftus, 2004). Loftus observes that “we have every reason to believe that some people who are presented with false evidence that they committed a crime might actually come to believe that they did” (p. i). Legal psychologists have been at the forefront of studying this bizarre phenomenon.

Family Forensic Psychology

Many forensic psychologists are becoming increasingly involved in family law, so much so that specializing in **family forensic psychology** is a good career option. Note from Table 1.1 that family psychology itself is a specialty area, recognized by the APA in 2002. The family has changed dramatically, even over the past 20 years. The 2000 census indicated a major increase of cohabitating, single-parent, and grandparent-led families as well as increases in families formed by gay and lesbian parents and their children (Grossman & Okun, 2003). In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 39.7% of all births in the United States were to unmarried women. In 2012, this figure rose to half of all births (Adam & Brady, 2013). In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that legally married same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits (*United States v. Windsor*, 2013) and also supported marriage equality in a different case (*Hollingsworth v. Perry*, 2013) by refusing to overturn a California court’s decision to strike down a law that would have prohibited it. Finally, in 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that same-sex couples have the constitutional right to marry.

These social changes and changes in the law affect the formation of families; family maintenance and dissolution; and numerous legal issues relating to children, medical and employment benefits, and even end-of-life decisions. Family forensic psychologists, then, are concerned with adoption; families in all their iterations; child support; divorce, including custody, relocation, and conflict resolution; abuse; elder law, including estate planning; family business; guardianship; juvenile justice; paternity; reproductive and genetic technologies; and other areas such as termination of parental rights. Family forensic psychology is involved in civil and criminal cases when the understanding of family dynamics and family systems is essential—for example, in cases involving visitation to prisons, release programs, and the impact of sentencing on family members (Grossman & Okun, 2003, p. 166). In this capacity, family forensic psychologists have a good opportunity to educate both legal professionals and families themselves about topics such as how to resolve conflicts. In so doing, they must be careful about their use of terminology and diagnostic categories so as not to escalate already tense situations (L. Greenberg, 2018). The best known areas of family

forensic psychology involve child custody, family violence, and the assessment and treatment of juveniles, all topics that are covered in some detail later in the book.

Psychology of Crime and Delinquency

The **psychology of crime and delinquency** is the *science* of the behavioral and mental processes of the adult and juvenile offender. It is primarily concerned with how antisocial behavior is acquired, evoked, maintained, and modified. Recent psychological research has focused on a person's cognitive versions of the world, especially the person's thoughts, beliefs, and values and how those that are inconsistent with leading a lawful life can be modified. It assumes that various criminal behaviors are acquired by daily living experiences, in accordance with the principles of learning, and are perceived, coded, processed, and stored in memory in a unique fashion for each individual.

Criminal psychology examines and evaluates prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies directed at reducing criminal or antisocial behavior. Research in crime and delinquency has discovered, for example, that chronic violence usually develops when children do poorly in school, do not get along with peers, have abusive parents, and attend schools that do not control disruptive and violent behavior (N. Crawford, 2002). Research has also found that social rejection by peers and others can lead to serious, violent offending: "A great deal of psychological functioning is predicated on belonging to the group and enjoying the benefits, both direct and indirect, of that belongingness" (Benson, 2002, p. 25). When this sense of belongingness is removed or restricted, a feeling of isolation and social exclusion occurs that tends to produce significant changes in behavior, such as an increase in aggression, violence, and other maladaptive behaviors. Under these conditions, human behavior may become impulsive, chaotic, selfish, disorganized, and even destructive. School shooters, for example, frequently express a sense of social isolation and rejection.

Researchers have also found, however, that well-designed and carefully executed prevention programs can prevent violence and a lifelong career path of crime. We discuss such programs in the chapters on crime and delinquency. Of late, applied psychologists working in school settings have found an increased need for their services, as we noted above. This has led to a keen interest in a new subdivision of school psychology.

Forensic School Psychology

A major area of research interest and practice today is **forensic school psychology**, which relates to the intersection of psychology, the educational system, and the legal system. Forensic school psychologists may not call themselves such—they may think of themselves simply as psychologists or school psychologists. Recall from Table 1.1 that school psychology was recognized as a specialty by the APA in 1998. If school psychologists routinely interact with a multitude of legal issues, we would consider them deserving of that additional title. Forensic school psychologists may work with local schools concerning school suspensions and expulsions, as well as possible placement of a youth into a residential school program and its concomitant implications for the youngster's home school district. They also perform a wide variety of assessment services, including threat assessments or assessing students who may have intellectual, developmental, or emotional difficulties.

Educational programs are required for young people in correctional and psychiatric facilities throughout the country, and some states have established special school districts within these facilities (Crespi, 1990). The challenges for forensic school psychologists within these contexts are considerable. Although the primary focus of public and private schools in the community is obviously education, such education in most correctional or psychiatric settings may be secondary to the reasons for confinement.

The need for additional consultation with school psychologists within the public and private school systems across the United States took on chilling urgency in the late 1990s when a rash of school shootings made headlines. Communities across the nation that had previously had a low profile suddenly became well known because of the violence that erupted within their schools. Since then, sporadic episodes of students taking a gun to school and injuring others have been publicized. As noted later in the book, these incidents, though still rare, now occur often enough to merit the attention of forensic psychologists and other mental health practitioners who consult with school administrators about steps to take to prevent violence from occurring. In light of the increasing attention paid to school violence, threat assessments to identify youth who are potentially dangerous have become more common. We discuss threat assessments in more detail in Chapter 8.

Victimology and Victim Services

Victimology refers to the study of persons who have experienced either actual or threatened physical, psychological, social, or financial harm as the result of the commission or attempted commission of crime against them. The harm may be direct or primary (experienced first-hand) or indirect or secondary (experienced by family members, relatives, survivors, or friends because of their closeness to the victim; Karmen, 2013).

Violent victimization of children, such as terrifying abductions, school shootings, and sexual attacks, can disrupt the course of child development in very fundamental ways and can be associated with emotional and cognitive problems over the course of the life span (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1995). In adults, there is strong evidence that the effects of criminal victimization—such as assault, robbery, and burglary—are both pervasive and persistent (Norris & Kaniasty, 1994). Until recently, psychological services were received by a very small fraction of crime victims (2%–7%; Norris, Kaniasty, & Scheer, 1990). In fact, it has only been within approximately the past 40 years that criminal victimology has become recognized as a scientific and professional field of study (Karmen, 2013). Increasingly, psychologists are beginning to play major roles in the research, evaluation, and treatment of crime victims from diverse cultural contexts and age groups. Colleges and universities now routinely offer courses, majors, and concentrations in victimology. Students wishing to pursue a research career in victimology probably should obtain a research doctorate in psychology, criminal justice, social work, or sociology. Those desiring careers as practitioners in the field would be advised to obtain a doctorate in clinical or counseling psychology or an MSW. However, there are other training opportunities and career paths as well.

Over the past 30 years, for example, the field of victim services has become a rapidly growing profession, and not all of these services are given directly to crime victims. Today, there is greater understanding of victims' issues due to legislation enacted to support victims' rights, increased funding for victim services, efforts by victim advocates, and active research in victimology. Victim services concentrating on victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and abuse of partners, children, and older adults have especially grown in recent years, and federal and state legislation has broadened the scope of understanding and services for victims. It is hoped that public funds will continue to be appropriated for these purposes.

Correctional Psychology

Correctional psychology is a vibrant branch of forensic psychology, broadly defined, and one in which multiple career opportunities are available. However, like police and public safety psychologists, many psychologists conducting research or working in corrections prefer to not

call themselves forensic psychologists. Rather, they are *correctional* psychologists. In addition, they usually agree that it is not appropriate to seek recognition for correctional psychology as a specialty area (Magaletta & Patry, 2020; Neal, 2018). However, there is lively debate about the extent to which forensic and correctional psychology overlap and whether a generalist training in applied psychology provides a better model for correctional psychology than forensic training (e.g., Magaletta & Patry, 2020; Neal, 2018, 2020). Essentially, some are concerned that PhD programs in forensic psychology or those with forensic psychology concentrations do not adequately prepare people for the many varied responsibilities they must assume in both institutional and community corrections. “Among the leading scholars in the field [of correctional psychology] . . . the distinction between corrections practice and psychology–law or forensic training has been consistently observed, increasingly noted, and unfortunately, ignored” (Magaletta et al., 2013, p. 293). This criticism is not directed only at forensic programs but also at doctoral-level programs in psychology in general. Magaletta et al. (2013) also note,

Few empirical studies allow us to know specifically how graduate programs introduce corrections as an area of study or a venue for practice, making it difficult to understand the link between academic programs and a psychology services workforce in corrections. (p. 292)

In their own study of 170 training directors of APA-accredited doctoral programs, Magaletta et al. (2013) found that only 1 in 3 programs reported they had one or more faculty members interested in corrections, and only 6% of the programs offered a corrections course. This is a valid point that should be taken into consideration by all directors of doctoral programs.

At the end of 2016, there were 6,613,500 adults under correctional supervision in the United States (Kaeble & Cowhig, 2017). This includes adults who were in prison, in jail, or supervised in the community, as on probation or parole. The overall number represents an 18% decline since 2009, when a decrease in the population was first noted, but declines in recent years have been very small—1.7% in 2013, 2% in 2010, and 0.9% in 2016. Despite the fact that the overall crime rate in the United States is decreasing, the number of persons under correctional supervision is not decreasing comparably. Nevertheless, the number of persons *incarcerated* is beginning to decrease, as some jurisdictions are closing prisons, reducing sentences, and developing more alternatives to imprisonment, particularly for nonviolent offenders. The prison population decreased 1.2% between the end of 2016 and 2017 (Bronson & Carson, 2019). We discuss these data as well as their implications in later chapters.

In 2020, the global health crisis associated with the novel coronavirus did not spare the prison and jail populations. In one large state (Ohio), 80% of inmates in a medium-security prison, and an unspecified percentage of staff, tested positive for the virus. Other state and federal prisons as well as local jails experienced high positive tests and even deaths. As a consequence, decisions were made when possible to allow early release of inmates serving time for nonviolent offenses or older inmates believed to pose little threat to society.

Virtually every detainee, prisoner, or offender serving time in the community requires or could benefit from one or more of the services offered by correctional psychologists, including assessment, crisis intervention, substance abuse treatment, or reentry planning, to name but a few. Recent meta-analyses of studies also indicate that mental health treatment results in improved mental health functioning as well as better adjustments and coping skills of offenders (R. D. Morgan et al., 2012). In addition, the large number of persons with mental disorders in the nation’s jails and prisons is of increasing concern to psychologists as well as other mental health professionals. Among the developments in corrections that should be watched closely is the possible renewal of support for private prisons, which had received considerable scrutiny in past years. Privately operated prisons have been

controversial on a number of fronts, and research does not support their effectiveness at reducing recidivism. We discuss this issue in its many facets in Chapter 12.

As the number of opportunities for psychologists in corrections has proliferated, correctional psychology has emerged as an exciting, rewarding, and challenging field. Yet, according to Magaletta et al. (2013), many positions remain unfilled, again partly because graduate schools have not adequately promoted this career option or sufficiently prepared doctoral students through relevant coursework. On a more optimistic note, though, more correctional institutions are now offering practicum opportunities for doctoral students interested in this area (Magaletta et al., 2017).

Research psychologists who are not necessarily working within the correctional system often study the psychological effects of correctional systems on prisoner behavior. Topics include the general effect of imprisonment on special populations of offenders, such as the mentally disordered or the elderly, the effects of crowding, the effects of isolation, and the outcome of various rehabilitative programs.

Juvenile corrections is a related but also distinct area in which psychologists play important roles, as we discuss in the last chapter of the book. Juvenile corrections, both in institutions and in the community, should focus on rehabilitation—thus, assessment and treatment strategies are paramount. Basically, however, psychologists working with juveniles and their families must be knowledgeable about recent research in adolescent development and decision making and be able to communicate that knowledge to legal professionals, including law enforcement, attorneys, judges, and others. Juvenile corrections also raises some of the same concerns as adult corrections, specifically, the assessment of risk; the effects of crowding and isolation; substance abuse programs; and work with special populations of offenders, such as juvenile sex offenders and juveniles with mental disorders and intellectual limitations.

Interestingly, psychologists who practice in adult as well as juvenile correctional settings are sometimes criticized for aligning themselves with prison administrators, and they may be confronted with ethical quandaries, such as when asked to perform custody-related functions like supervising or restraining inmates. In death penalty states, psychologists may be asked to assess the risk of future dangerousness of a person facing a potential death sentence. Lawyers representing prisoners on death row also may argue that they are not competent to be executed because they have either serious mental illness or severe intellectual disability. Courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have addressed these issues in recent landmark cases. Psychologists in recent years also have been asked to perform evaluations of sexual offenders at the end of their sentences, to determine whether they are eligible for civil commitment under sexually violent predator laws. These are all controversial topics that are covered in later chapters.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As recently as 35 years ago, the term *forensic psychology* had barely been introduced into psychological or legal literature. Today, as we have seen, it is a commonly encountered term, but it still defies definition. It is often used interchangeably with legal psychology and psychology and law. Although some favor a narrow definition limiting it to clinical practice offered to the

legal system, particularly the courts, the contributions of research psychologists may be undermined by such an approach. The most recently adopted *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* (APA, 2013c), as well as the writings of prominent forensic psychologists (e.g., DeMatteo et al., 2009; Heilbrun & Brooks, 2010; Otto & Weiner, 2013), recognize the importance of contributions from

researchers, although there continues to be emphasis placed on practice. In other words, researchers are not forensic psychologists if they do not interact with the legal community. Furthermore, in some jurisdictions one must be certified as a forensic psychologist to practice in certain arenas, such as court settings.

In addition, though, it is important to consider the context in which psychology is practiced. Limiting forensic psychology to work with courts does not recognize well enough the law-related functions performed by psychologists working with law enforcement, corrections, victims, or schools concerned about the safety of their students and staff. Finally, the many contributions of psychologists who study the psychology of crime and delinquency deserve to be included in this field, as long as their findings are available to the legal system. The law surely can benefit, for example, from research on adolescent development and decision making or research on the prevention and control of sex offending. As we note throughout the book, and as illustrated in many of the Perspective boxes, researchers on such topics often testify in court as expert witnesses and consult with lawyers and judges on a regular basis.

We have persisted, then, in advocating for a broad definition of forensic psychology, one that might divide it into the five subareas covered in this chapter, although other organizational divisions are possible. In each of the areas discussed, numerous career opportunities exist. Both undergraduate and graduate programs have rapidly seen the need for preparation for careers in forensic psychology, whether by offering degree programs in the field or by offering concentrations within a broader program, such as a doctorate in clinical, counseling, or developmental psychology. Furthermore, professionals themselves are regularly offered opportunities for

licensing, certification, and continuing education as well as guidelines for practicing their profession.

In sum, the field of forensic psychology, as we define it broadly, provides ample opportunities for psychologists interested in interacting with some aspect of the law. It is an area of specialization that has developed rapidly and shows no signs of stagnation. Many of the scholars who are cited and featured in this book began their studies at a time when forensic psychology was not prominent and was not widely considered a career choice. Moreover, as recently as the turn of the 21st century, a relatively small group of forensic specialists devoted themselves full time to this field, whereas a much larger group of psychologists provided occasional forensic services or provided such services only within a circumscribed area, such as child custody evaluations (Otto & Heilbrun, 2002). Otto and Heilbrun (2002) predicted then that the field would grow, and they argued that the field must develop a plan to ensure that forensic practice overall was well informed and competent. This plan was especially needed in the area of forensic testing and assessment.

A decade ago, Heilbrun and Brooks (2010) commented on the remarkable expansion of the field noting that there had been substantial progress. In proposing an agenda for the future, they emphasized the need for interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration, continuing improvement in the quality of forensic mental health assessments, a better integration of science and practice, and better outreach to a variety of settings. In many respects, considerable progress has been made toward reaching these laudable goals, as will be seen in the chapters ahead. Nonetheless, challenges, some new and some long-standing, confront forensic psychologists today, making the field an exciting one in which to be involved.

KEY CONCEPTS

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| American Psychological Association (APA) 17 | Family forensic psychology 27 | Psychology of crime and delinquency 28 |
| Association for Psychological Science (APS) 17 | Forensic entomology 5 | Questioned document examination or analysis 5 |
| Correctional psychology 29 | Forensic psychiatrists 14 | Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology 7 |
| Digital investigative analysis 5 | Forensic psychology 4 | Victimology 29 |
| Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (EPPCC) 19 | Forensic school psychology 28 | |
| | Forensic social workers 14 | |
| | Legal psychology 26 | |
| | Police and public safety psychology (PPSP) 24 | |

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Contrast the narrow and broad definitions of *forensic psychology*.
2. Contrast forensic psychology with other forensic sciences.
3. Identify the five subspecialties of forensic psychology covered in this text, and provide illustrations of the contributions of forensic psychologists in each one.
4. Explain the difference between the PhD and the PsyD degrees.
5. Give examples of any four ethical issues that might be faced by psychologists practicing forensic psychology.
6. What is meant by the term *prescription privileges* when applied to psychologists? Briefly discuss the progress psychologists have made in obtaining these privileges and discuss possible objections that might be raised.

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