

APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

Lecture 8: Delinquent and Criminal behaviour

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Otto and Fulero (2006) →

Forensic psychology is the application of psychological research, theory or practice to the legal system or legal issues

What do Forensic Psychologists do?

- Work in a range of forensic settings including:
 - HM prison service
 - NHS forensic hospitals
 - Youth offending teams
 - Probation
 - Private forensic health care
 - Police
 - Some foreign office

Psychology AND the law

- Seen as separate disciplines (Bartol & Bartol, 1994)
- Research that falls under this relationship examine assumptions made by the law/legal system

E.g.,

Are eyewitnesses accurate?

Do certain interrogation techniques cause people to make false confessions?

Is it possible to accurately predict whether an offender will be violent when released from prison?

Psychology IN the law

- The use of psychological knowledge in the legal system (Haney, 1980)
- More about applying the knowledge to the field, for example:
 - A psychologist might testify that an eyewitness may have incorrectly identified a defendant from a police line-up
 - A police officer can use knowledge of psychology in an investigation by changing his questioning strategy during an interrogation

Forensic Psychology in the media

■ Portrayed as glamorous

- What television shows or films can you think of that are forensic in nature?
- Does this seem realistic to you?
- What do you think the reality of forensic psychology is?



Forensic Psychology in the media

- Forensic Psychology has gained recognition as a result of the entertainment media's fascination with the intersection of psychology and the law.
- Media portrayal of forensic psychology is indicative of genuine concern, yet naïve fascination, with the legal system. The media seems to accentuate the importance of forensic psychology but, at the same time, misrepresents its true scientific base
 - (Vitriol, 2008)



A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF...

A forensic psychologist in training!

A week in the life of a forensic psychologist in training

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	Check through e-mails	Preparation for individual coping session with arsonist (core role 1)	Meet with group therapists to plan the session for this week (core role 1)	Preparation of the delivery of Sex Offender Therapy awareness training to staff (core role 4)	Final preparation for awareness training session (core role 4)
9:00	Supervision with coordinating supervisor	Delivery of coping session (core role 1)			
10:00		Write report for coping intervention (core role 3)	Group supervision for violence treatment therapy		Delivery of Sex Offender Therapy awareness training to staff (core role 4)
11:00	Prepare materials for research (core role 2)				
12:00	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
13:00	Preparation for risk assessment session with sexual offender (core role 3)		Final preparation for session and review group member notes	Final preparation for session and review group member notes	Final preparation for session and review group member notes
14:00	Individual session with client (core roles 1 & 3)	Visit to prison to collect data for research project (core role 2)	Delivery of Violence Treatment group therapy (core role 1)	Delivery of Violence Treatment group therapy (core role 1)	Delivery of Violence Treatment group therapy (core role 1)
15:00	Complete post-session notes and put into report format (core role 3)				
16:00	Complete practice diary		Complete post-session logs and practice diary	Complete post-session logs and practice diary	Complete post-session logs and practice diary

Professional and ethical issues

- HCPC's standards for psychologists
- Specific considerations for the forensic psychologist

BPS core roles in Forensic Psychology

- 1) Conducting psychological applications and interventions
- 2) Research
- 3) Communicating psychological knowledge and advice to other professionals
- 4) Training other professionals in psychological skills and knowledge

TABLE 16.2 Combinations of Offender Populations and Psychological Tasks.

Tasks	Behaviours	Population characteristics	Locations
• Completing risk assessments	• Sexual offending	• Male	• Prisons (sentenced prisoners)
• Completing assessments of clients' needs	• Violent offending	• Female	• Prisons (remand prisoners)
• Group treatment therapies	• Emotional dysregulation	• Juvenile	• Private/public-sector prisons
• One-to-one interventions (offence related)	• Substance-related offending	• Young adults	• Forensic mental health setting (high, medium and low secure)
• One-to-one interventions (clinical issues, e.g. depression or anxiety)	• Drug dependency	• Elderly	• NHS/private-sector hospitals
• Supervision of therapeutic interventions	• Interpersonal skills	• Cognitively impaired	• Probation
• Consultancy (i.e. in crisis situations)	• Cognitive skills	• Learning disability Mental illness	• Hostels
• Training others in matters relating to offenders and/or offending behaviour	• Self-harm	• Personality disordered	• Community
• Completing research to support practice	• Arson		• Private practice
• Providing evidence in formal settings (e.g. juries, panels, Mental Health Review Tribunals, courts)			

Source: Adapted from British Psychological Society (2008).

BPS core roles in Forensic Psychology

- 1) Conducting psychological applications and interventions

Can involve engaging in interventions and being mindful of ethical practice and decision making

Awareness of own competencies is crucial, as is recognition of own limitations

BPS core roles in Forensic Psychology

2) Research

- *Relies on research that will direct the way in which practitioners engage with their clients.*
- *Research is not only conducted on offenders!*
 - Also, victims, staff, general public, etc
- *Trainee must demonstrate understanding of ethics, data analysis, protocols, report writing, and explaining research to lay populations*

BPS core roles in Forensic Psychology

3) Communicating psychological knowledge and advice to other professionals

- *Ready and willing to communicate knowledge and aim problem solving*
 - Aim to influence practice and work of others
- *Still being aware of own limitations – keep others 'safe'*

BPS core roles in Forensic Psychology

4) Training other professionals in psychological skills and knowledge

- *This eventually gets analysed, too!*

Reflective practice

- Highly important in forensic psychology
- Enhances and improves professional practice
- Builds on existing knowledge
- Shows learning from experience!

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

Working with offenders

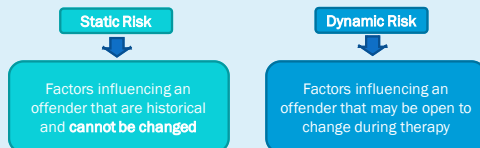
- Carrying out one-to-one assessments with individual offenders
 - *This can include:*
 - Assessment of the risk of re-offending
 - Assessment of likelihood for suicidal intent or self-harm
 - Assessment of the probability in engaging in other high-risk behaviour

Working with offenders

- A forensic psychologist who has professional mental health experience and training can diagnose mental health problems and personality disorders in individuals
- Has to consider the areas of risk presenting in the offender:
 - *RISK ASSESSMENT*
 - *STATIC RISK*
 - *DYNAMIC RISK*

Risk Assessment

- An appraisal by a forensic psychologist who will consider the dangers posed to others by the offender, as well as attempt to understand the individual offender. This includes:



Factors that influence risk

- **Offending attitudes and values:**
 - *E.g., violence is ok, rape is acceptable and a victim can 'ask' to be raped*
- **Unhelpful beliefs of the world that promote offending:**
 - *E.g., the world is an untrusting and hostile place, people are just out to ridicule you*
- **A lack of knowledge in effective development and management of relationships with others:**
 - *E.g., poor communication skills or poor expression of emotion/negotiation in an intimate relationship*

Dynamic Factors

- Dynamic factors that are common to both sex offenders and non-sex offenders:

- *Unstable employment*
- *Abuse of alcohol and drugs*
- *Holding unhelpful pro-offending attitudes*
- *Associating with criminal peers*

Hanson and Bussiere (1998)

Evolving risk assessment

As risk assessment evolves, there is a continuing emphasis on the importance of protective factors.

Protective factors: factors which effectively buffer against risk and reduce risk.

E.g. Identified risk factors in an offender may be minimised if the offender is in an appropriate intimate relationship where the partner can be a positive influence.

Here, the appropriate intimate relationship and positive influence of partner = **protective factor**.

Youth Justice Board (2005)

- Identified a range of individual, social and health factors that help protect young people from engaging in criminal activity.

INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Female → Females are generally involved in fewer criminal activities

Resilient temperament

Sense of self-efficacy → Ability to feel we can succeed, and our confidence in doing so

Positive, outgoing disposition

High intelligence

Youth Justice Board (2005)

SOCIAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Stable, warm, affectionate relationship with one or both parents

Link with teachers, other adults, and peers who hold positive attitudes, modelling positive social behaviour

Youth Justice Board (2005)

HEALTHY STANDARDS:

Prevailing attitudes across a community

Views of parents

Promotion of healthy standards within school

Opportunities for involvement, social and reasoning skills, recognition and due praise

Formulation of Offending

Risk assessment is helpful for considering factors that make an individual vulnerable to re-offending...

BUT...

Combining these to form a detailed understanding of how they link together for the individual who has committed the offence(s) is paramount!

Working with offenders

- Developing, implementing and reviewing appropriate offender treatments/rehab programmes

– *These can include:*

- Anger management
- Treatment for drug and/or alcohol addiction
- Social and cognitive skills training

Working with offenders

- Undertaking research projects to evaluate situations affecting prisoners

– *Investigating the impact of bullying in prisons*

– *The effectiveness of anger management programmes in prisons*

Working with offenders

- Providing expert witness testimony at court
- Contributing to policy development to ensure continuous service improvement
- Undertaking statistical analysis for forensic client profiling

Working with offenders

- Delivering training to other forensic staff
 - Stress management
 - How to cope with understanding bullying
 - **Techniques for crisis (hostage) negotiation**

CRISIS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS

The behavioural influence stairway model

Crisis and Conflict Situations

Crisis situation

☞ Example: when a prisoner barricades themselves in their cell because they are distressed and want to end their life

- No clear goals;
- High emotional distress
- Calm the situation down and increase rational thinking

Crisis and Conflict Situations

■ Conflict situation

- Example: where a prisoner takes another prisoner hostage with a clear purpose (such as a demand to move prisons).
- The individual has a clear plan and focus in mind

Psychological Theory

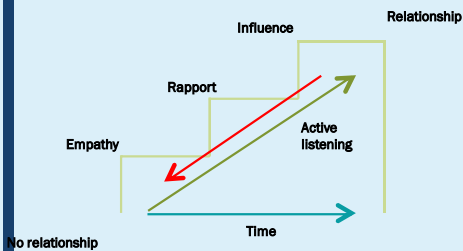
- Managing crisis and conflict situations has a strong basis in core psychological theory
- Ryan and Deci (2000): there are three basic human needs



The Behavioural Influence Stairway Model (BISM)

- The most utilised approach for developing relationships with individuals in conflict or crisis
- This approach encourages autonomy, relatedness and competence
- Vecchi, Van Hasselt and Romano (2005) – the emphasis should be on building a positive and trusting relationship with the individual

BISM



THE BEHAVIOURAL INFLUENCE STAIRWAY MODEL (BISM)

Stage 1: ACTIVE LISTENING

The negotiator attempts to calm the situation by listening carefully

Certain techniques may be used, such as mirroring, paraphrasing, emotion labelling and summarising (Van Hasselt et al., 2005).

THE BEHAVIOURAL INFLUENCE STAIRWAY MODEL (BISM)

Stage 2: **EMPATHY**

Implies identification with and understanding of the individuals' situation, feelings and motives

Should not be confused with sympathy, which indicates pity; the goal is to establish a relationship – not to feel sorry for the person.

THE BEHAVIOURAL INFLUENCE STAIRWAY MODEL (BISM)

Stage 3: **RAPPORT**

Up until now, the relationship has been one-sided with the person in crisis talking and the negotiator listening

Once rapport develops, the person in crisis is ready to be influenced by the negotiator

THE BEHAVIOURAL INFLUENCE STAIRWAY MODEL (BISM)

Stage 4: **INFLUENCE**

The act or power of producing an effect without apparent force or direct authority

The negotiator earns the right to suggest a course of action

Both work together to identify a solution that is suitable to both parties

THE BEHAVIOURAL INFLUENCE STAIRWAY MODEL (BISM)

Behavioural change will only occur if all four stages are successfully completed and a relationship has formed between the person in crisis and the negotiator

Difficulty reaching this stage is often the result of the negotiator moving too quickly through the stages or skipping stages

BISM – The forensic psychologists role

- Monitors the progress of negotiations and advises the negotiator on the most beneficial tactics and approaches
- Ensures that the stairway is implemented effectively by the negotiation team
- Principled negotiation

BISM – The forensic psychologists role

- 1) *Separating personalities from the problem*
 - The forensic psychologist ensures the negotiator focuses on the problem and does not let any emotions get in the way
 - Failure on the forensic psychologists part can lead to confrontation and no progress

BISM – The forensic psychologists role

■ 2) Focusing on interests and not positions

- The forensic psychologist encourages the negotiator to focus on the interests of the person in crisis
- Focusing on the **real** problem

BISM – The forensic psychologists role

■ 3) Discussing options and alternatives

- Forensic psychologist encourages the negotiator to identify with the person in crisis all the possible options for dealing with the current situation
- Considering all the options to come to the most effective solution that leads to a safe and peaceful resolution for all

BISM – The forensic psychologists role

■ 4) Maintaining an objective criteria

- Forensic psychologist must advise the negotiator to be clear with the person in crisis about what is negotiable and what is not
- Forensic psychologists must also always be aware of the limits of their role/ their ability to function in a crisis or conflict situation

Any questions?