

# Book review

## Clinical Forensic Psychology: Introductory Perspectives on Offending

By **Carlo Garofalo and Jelle J. Sijtsema**  
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Clinical forensic psychology is a specialized field within psychology that combines the principles and practices of clinical psychology with forensic psychology (Bartol and Bartol, 2013). It involves applying psychological knowledge and techniques to legal and criminal justice issues (Heilbrun *et al.*, 2016). Clinical forensic psychologists work at the intersection of the mental health and legal systems, often providing assessment, evaluation and treatment for individuals involved in legal proceedings (Melton *et al.*, 2017). Assistant Professor Carlo Garofalo works at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. As a doctoral-level clinical psychologist, her research centres on how mental health problems such as depression and anxiety contribute to aggressive and antisocial behaviour (ASB). The best academic journals in the field of clinical and forensic psychology have published his work. Associate Professor at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, Jelle J. Sijtsema. The impact of interpersonal dynamics on the emergence of ASB is a major area of interest in his studies. His work is published in top-tier journals in the domains of developmental psychology and criminology/penology.

The field of clinical forensic psychology continues to grow, and several innovative steps can be implemented to advance its development:

- Embracing technology (such as video conferencing technology and artificial intelligence to connect forensic psychologists with incarcerated individuals for assessment and treatment);
- Multicultural competence (involves understanding and respecting cultural differences and applying this understanding in practice);
- Interdisciplinary collaboration (such as law, criminology and social work) can result in a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behaviour and more effective interventions;
- Focus on trauma (such as incorporating trauma-informed care into forensic psychology practice);
- Alternative justice models focus on healing harm through practices to heal victims and perpetrators;
- Research and training (covering risk assessment, treatment and the impact of psychopathy on criminal behaviour);
- Ethical considerations (includes considerations around the ethics of labelling, use of technology in assessment and treatment of diverse populations); and
- Promote social justice (especially in the criminal justice system) to advocate for the fair treatment of all individuals, regardless of their race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

The target audience for this book is students, researchers and professionals in the fields of psychology, criminology and law.

The novelty of this book lies in its exploration of the psychological processes of intimacy and potency in

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the context of criminal behaviour. This introduces the concept of the narrative roles questionnaire (NRQ), a tool developed based on the experiences of criminals while committing crimes. NRQ characterizes individuals based on their perception of their role in the crime, such as seeing themselves as simply carrying out their duties or feeling helpless and victimized. Discusses the concept of endophenotype, or the internal intermediate part of the mechanism that links genetic risk to a particular phenotype, in relation to ASB. Presents a theoretical framework for understanding the narrative experiences of young offenders.

Each book chapter contains information and empirical data (such as chronology, case studies and research results) about clinical forensic psychology. A balance of subject matter and book-length is achieved. Each discussion is concise and clear to enrich knowledge. There are four parts of the book with major themes for discussion. This initial section examines possible psychological explanations for ASB, providing a comprehensive foundation of how psychology plays a key role in analysing criminal acts. Factors influencing crime, including its biological, psychological, cognitive and social aspects, are explored here. This approach is carried out by considering the natural variation in individual differences in each of these areas. This opens the way to understanding why some individuals may be more likely to engage in offending than others, going beyond the standard framework of mental disorders. More detailed information on how mental constructs influence criminal behaviour is presented in Chapters 2–7, while subsequent chapters in this section review the significance of social and environmental factors.

The second part investigates the relationship between mental health challenges and involvement in

criminal behaviour. This book explores a variety of psychological problems frequently observed in individuals who commit offences. Chapters 11 through 13 focus on personality disorders that have special significance in the field of clinical forensic psychology. Meanwhile, Chapters 14 through 18 explain the pervasiveness of these psychological disorders in the offender population while dispelling common misconceptions surrounding the relationship between mental disorders and criminal behaviour. This section, which is seamlessly integrated with the rest of the book, does not imply a simple correspondence between specific mental health conditions and criminal behaviour. Rather, this book provides an up-to-date foundation on the most common forms of psychopathology associated with increased risk of offending, offering insights that can inform clinical decision-making and facilitate communication among practitioners. The emphasis on established diagnostic syndromes is also valuable in drawing from the extensive literature that has been accumulated over many years, and the authors of these chapters are leading figures in the field. As seen in these chapters and in line with the previous section, readers will recognize the inherent interconnectedness between the various mental health conditions discussed, as well as their links to the psychosocial factors explored in the first section.

The third section moves away from a narrow focus on specific disorders and instead covers a spectrum of behaviours and offender categories that have relevance in a forensic context. This approach aligns with common practice in correctional and forensic mental health, providing an effective initial method for resource allocation and guiding subsequent individual decision-making processes. Subjects covered include juvenile offenders and other specific

groups of offenders defined by the nature of their offences. Each group has its explanatory perspective, risk factors, and clinical and legal approaches. While this book does not provide an in-depth exploration of all offences and categories of offenders, it does emphasize aggressive behaviour, which is a fundamental aspect of many offending behaviours.

In the concluding section, section four explores the more pragmatic and practical aspects of clinical forensic psychology, with a focus on risk evaluation and offender intervention. This segment is essential reading for students enrolled in a clinical forensic psychology program, as it covers the basic principles of risk assessment and common treatment methodologies. Additionally, this book provides state-of-the-art insights regarding the evaluation of a broad spectrum of antisocial personality traits, as well as information regarding forensic schema therapy's innovative approach to treatment. This section concludes with a contemplation of the ethical dilemmas that physicians and researchers face in the practice of forensic psychology. In essence, it serves as the ultimate resource for experienced professionals looking to refresh their expertise and refine their practical skills.

The implication of this book is to provide a comprehensive guide to the field of forensic psychology. It covers a wide range of topics, including ASB, risk assessment, psychopathology, offending behaviour and treatment. Provides an overview of the historical origins and development of forensic psychology, tracing its roots back to ancient Greece and India. Discusses future challenges and possibilities in the field of forensic psychology (such as assessment of diverse populations and advances in technology). Discusses the evolution of the field of forensic psychology, highlighting the contributions of early pioneers such as Sigmund Freud and Hugo Munsterberg. It also discusses the role of important court cases in integrating

psychology into the legal arena and the formation of professional organizations. Discusses the lack of attention to race in forensic psychology and the role of media and popular culture in shaping public perceptions of the field. Discusses criminal psychology and studies various theories that try to explain criminal behaviour. It discusses the evolution of the field, the role of psychological theories of crime and the development of interdisciplinary theories (such as victimology and restorative justice, as well as tools used in forensic assessment).

Discusses the emergence of sexually violent predator civil commitment laws in the 1990s and the role of forensic psychologists in those cases. It also explores the academic and training programs available in forensic psychology, as well as the various roles and careers within the field. Discusses a biopsychosocial developmental perspective of ASB, exploring the interactions between genetic, neurobiological, and environmental factors in the development of ASB. This report highlights the importance of early intervention and prevention programs from a development perspective. Discusses the interaction between genetic and environmental factors in the development of ASB, highlighting the concept of differential susceptibility and the role of epigenetics.

The strength of this book lies in its comprehensive exploration of the psychological perspectives that can explain deviant behaviour, providing a solid understanding of how psychological factors play a role when explaining offending behaviour. This goes beyond traditional classifications of mental disorders and explains the natural variation of differences between individuals in each domain, which in turn may explain why some individuals are more susceptible to offending than others. Explores the role of narrative in understanding criminal psychology, emphasizing the choices perpetrators make, the way they view themselves

and their surroundings, and the aspects that are under their control. This book is empirically based (such as chronology, case studies and research results), thus making the content more interesting and relevant for readers.

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