



2023-24 FALL

**FORENSIC
PSYCHOLOGY**

WEEK 2

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS FOR FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

- **The Division of Forensic Psychology (DFP) of The British Psychological Society** (<http://www.bps.org.uk/networks-andcommunities/member-microsite/division-forensic-psychology>) was founded in 1977.
- **The European Association of Psychology and Law (EAPL)** (<https://eapl.eu/about>) was formed in 1992 and is the principal European organisation for psychologists and lawyers who work at the interface of the two disciplines.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS FOR FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

- **The American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS)**, (<http://www.ap-ls.org>), Division 41 of the American Psychological Association (APA), is an interdisciplinary organisation devoted to scholarship, practice and public service in psychology and law.
- **The Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition (SARMAC)** (<http://www.sarmac.org/society.html>) was founded in 1994.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS FOR FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

- **The National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)** (<http://www.nota.co.uk>)
- **The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)** (<http://www.atsa.com>).

Forensic Psychology (MA), (PhD)

- Students with at least a Bachelor of Psychology degree are accepted (Ankara Uni.)
- http://bbs.ankara.edu.tr/Ders_Plani.aspx?bno=3301&bot=978
- Students with Bachelor of Psychology and Master of Psychology degrees are accepted (Ankara Uni.)
- http://bbs.ankara.edu.tr/Ders_Plani.aspx?bno=3300&bot=647

Psychological Approaches to Understanding Crime



Moral Reasoning Theory

- Moral reasoning refers to **how individuals reason** about and **justify their behaviour** with respect to **moral issues**.
- The best-known approach to moral reasoning within psychology is the **cognitive-developmental approach** initially **proposed by Piaget (1932)** and subsequently **developed by Kohlberg (1969, 1984)**.

Moral Reasoning Theory

- Kohlberg's theory is composed of **six stages of moral reasoning** through which individuals progress, with reasoning becoming **more abstract and complex**.
- This theory was **revised by Gibbs** (2003, 2010, 2014) into a theory of "**sociomoral reasoning**" in which the roles of **social perspective-taking** and **empathy** are given a greater emphasis.

Moral Reasoning Theory

Immature moral reasoning		Mature moral reasoning	
Stage 1: Unilateral and physicalistic	Stage 2: Exchanging and instrumental	Stage 3 : Mutual and prosocial	Stage 4: Systemic and standard
Reasoning refers to powerful authority figures (e.g. parents) and the physical consequences of behaviour. Individuals show little or no perspective-taking.	Reasoning incorporates a basic understanding of social interaction. However, this is typically in terms of cost/benefit deals, with the benefits to the individual being of most importance.	Reasoning reflects an understanding of interpersonal relationship and the norms/expectations associated with these. Empathy and social perspective-taking are apparent, along with ideas appeals to one's own conscience.	Reasoning reflects an understanding of complex social systems, with appeals to societal requirements, basic rights and values, and character/integrity.

Moral Reasoning Theory

- Looking at Kohlberg/Gibbs' theories, it is possible to morally justify offending behaviour at each of the stages:
- **Stage 1** – offender is morally justified **if punishment can be avoided.**
- **Stage 2** – offender is morally justified **if the benefits to the individual outweigh the costs.**
- **Stage 3** – offending is morally justified **if it maintains personal relationships.**
- **Stage 4** – offending is morally justified **if it maintains society or is sanctioned by a social institution.**

Moral Reasoning Theory

- Gibbs (2003, 2010, 2014) has considered what particular **features characterise the moral development of offenders**. He suggests:
 - (1) **developmental delay in moral judgement;**
 - (2) **self-serving cognitive distortions;**
 - (3) **social skill deficiencies.**
- These individuals are **egocentric**, they **blame others or external factors**, have **hostile attribution** and **minimize consequences** to **reduce feelings of guilt and regret**.

Social Information-Processing Theory

- It explains **aggression** and **delinquent behaviour** in order to **examine individual differences**.
- This model is a **six-step** model:
 - 1. **Encoding of social cues**
 - 2. **Interpretation and mental representation of the situation**
 - 3. **Clarification of goals/outcomes for the situation**
 - 4. **Access or construction of responses for the situation**
 - 5. **Choice of response**
 - 6. **Performance of chosen response.**

Social Information-Processing Theory

- Crick & Dodge (1994) suggest that individuals can simultaneously perform the **different steps**, allowing for feedback between processes.
- Therefore, the model is conceptualised as a **circular, rather than a linear process**.
- At all steps processing is **influenced by social knowledge structures** based on an individual's **past experiences**, such as **social schema** and **scripts**.

Social information-processing and criminal behaviour

- At the first **two steps**, **aggressive individuals** experience a range of problems in **encoding and interpreting social cues**, leading to an **inaccurate representation of a situation**.
- This **tendency is exacerbated** when individuals **feel threatened** or **react impulsively**. Research also shows that aggressive people **attribute greater blame to external factors**.



Aggressive individuals generate fewer responses than non-aggressive people, because they have a limited repertoire and poor social skills.

THEORIES, EVIDENCE, AND CRIME

Interpersonal Violence

- A range of crimes is included **under the label of “violence”**, including **murder, manslaughter and robbery**.
- **Domestic violence** is gaining recognition as a **serious problem**.
- **Violent offenders** have an **early onset** of offending behaviour, and show considerable **continuity of aggression and violence throughout their life**.

Social factors and violence

- A range of social factors predict violent offending:
 - family structure
 - parenting style
 - severe abuse in childhood
 - witnessing family violence

Cognitive-behavioural theory and violence

- **Cognitive-behavioural** approaches focus on the **role of cognitive appraisal** and other **internal processes** in violence.
- One way of examining these processes is through Crick and Dodge's (1994) **six step model of social information-processing**.

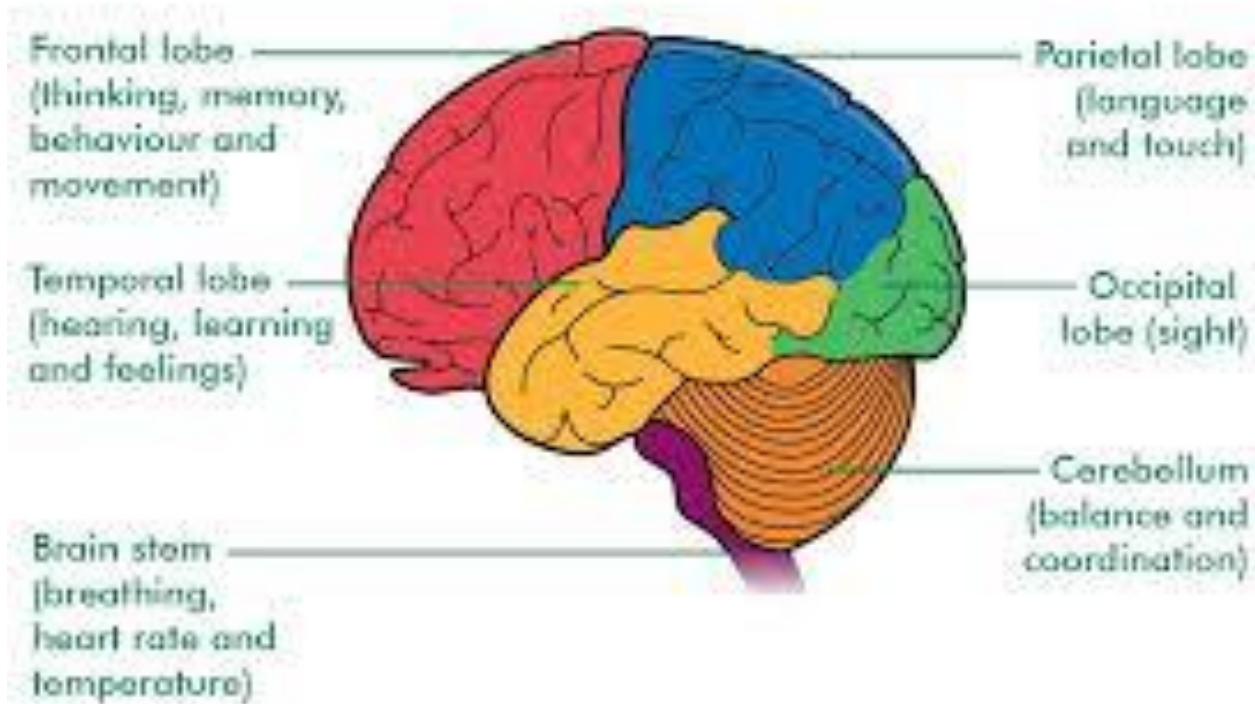
Cognitive-behavioural theory and violence

- **Aggressive individuals show a range of distinctive processing patterns:**
 - **hostile attributional bias**
 - **low empathy**
 - **emotional arousal**

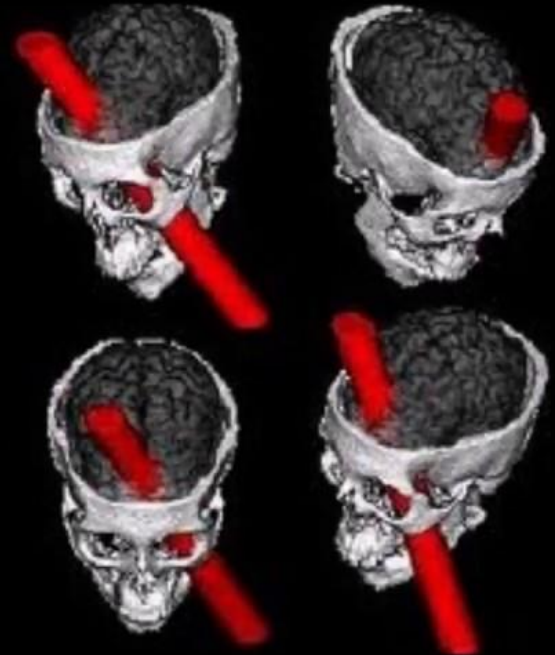
Neuropsychological factors and violence

- **Violence** is associated with **brain damage** or **dysfunction**.
- Research suggests that **damage** and **malfunctioning of the frontal and temporal lobes** is most associated with violence.
- **Frontal lobe lesions** are associated with **personality changes** such as:
 - **apathy**
 - **lack of foresight**
 - **irritability**
 - **grandiosity**

Parts of the Brain



The amazing case of Phineas Gage



Neuropsychological factors and violence

- There may be links between structures in the **temporal lobe – the amygdala and ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC)** – and **violence, specifically psychopathy.**
- **Dysfunction** in these two brain structures leads to **deficits in stimulus-reinforcement learning** and the **ability to respond to fearful and sad expressions** in others, and **impaired decision-making.**

Neuropsychological factors and violence

- In recent years attention has turned to the **role of neuropsychological factors in violence.**
- This approach proposes that the **development of violence results from an interaction of social, environmental, genetic and neurobiological factors.**

Domestic violence

- **Domestic violence – or intimate partner violence (IPV)** – is an increasingly recognised issue.
- While most research concerns **male perpetrators** and **female victims**, domestic violence can also occur with **female perpetrators** and **male victims** and within **same-sex relationships**.

Domestic violence

- A number of **explanations** have been suggested for **IPV**:
 - **Feminist theories**, which propose that **society is patriarchal**, with an implicit assumption that **men control the lives of women and children**. It is argued that **men seek to maintain women's subordination** through **physical violence**, as well as **psychological and economic coercion**.

Domestic violence

- **Social learning theory** has also been applied to domestic violence. This approach views **domestic violence** as a behaviour that is **learnt through experiencing rewards** from it and **observing and modelling** similar behaviour (**vicarious learning**).
- **Other approaches** view domestic violence as **caused by psychopathology among abusers**.

GANG VIOLENCE



GANG VIOLENCE INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

- The **young people** from **socially deprived areas** often face other associated problems.
- For example, families **living in inner-city** areas often live in **poverty**, with parents either in **low paid jobs** or **unemployed**, which can put pressure on family life.
- Where there is a **gang culture**, joining one of the groups can provide some **protection from being victimised**.

GANG VIOLENCE INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Being **surrounded by a culture of violence** often appears to **lead to further violence** through such incremental steps.
- Falling in with a **bad group of friends** can lead young people to **stop valuing education** – or rather, **educational achievement is not seen as being “cool”** and **respect** is gained through other, more **antisocial activities**.

Sexual Offending

- The term “sexual offences” covers a number of crimes, including
 - **rape,**
 - **unlawful sexual intercourse,**
 - **indecent assault,**
 - **indecent exposure,**
 - **gross indecency with a child.**
- Other **non-sexual offences** can also sometimes have a **sexual element**, such as **sexually motivated murder.**

Sexual Offending

- There are **six major theories** of sexual offending, **three of which cover child sexual abuse**, **one that relates to rape**, and **two** that attempt to **explain all types** of sexual offending.
- Finkelhor's (1984) "**Four Preconditions**" model proposes that there are four preconditions that a **child molester** must **pass through prior to an offence**.

Sexual Offending

➤ “Four Preconditions:

- 1. a motivation to sexually abuse** (*such as sexual arousal to a child or blockage of sexual expression with an adult*)
- 2. internal inhibitions against offending must be overcome** (*distorted beliefs about child abuse, use of alcohol or drugs, or experiencing severe stress*)
- 3. external factors must be overcome** (*allow the abuse to occur, for example gaining the trust of the child and their family, or the child being left alone*)
- 4. child’s resistance must be overcome** (*through using force or child grooming techniques*)

Sexual Offending

- A second theory of **child sexual abuse** is Hall and Hirschmann's (1992) **quadripartite model**.
- This proposes there are **four components** necessary for an offence to take place:
 1. **sexual arousal** to children;
 2. **attitudes and beliefs (cognitions)** that justify child abuse;
 3. **poor self-regulation**;
 4. **personality problems**.

Sexual Offending

- The third theory is the “**Pathways Model**” set out by Ward and Siegert (2002), which proposes **four separate but interacting psychological mechanisms** are involved in child sexual abuse. These are:
 - 1. intimacy/social deficits;**
 - 2. distorted sexual scripts;**
 - 3. cognitive distortions;**
 - 4. emotional dysregulation.**

Sexual Offending

- The four components are involved in all sexual offences, but one component dominates each pathway into offending.
- **Offenders with multiple dysfunctional mechanisms** form a fifth pathway, hypothesised to be the “**pure paedophiles**”.

Sexual Offending

➤ theories of rape:

- an **interaction model of sexual aggression** was proposed by Malamuth, Heavey, and Linz (1993)
- model proposes that **sexual aggression is the result of the interaction of two “paths”**:
 1. the **hostile masculinity** path
 2. the **sexual promiscuity** path

Sexual Offending

- The **hostile masculinity** path emphasises the **role of aggressive intimate relationships and sexual conquest in the concept of masculinity**, along with **valuing power, risk-taking, dominance and competitiveness**.
- The **sexual promiscuity** path focuses on the **role of sexual behaviours in maintaining self-esteem and peer status**, and the **appeal of impersonal sex**.

Sexual Offending

1. Marshall and Barbaree's (1990) **integrated theory** covers **all types** of sexual offending:
 - This approach takes account of **biological, developmental, socio-cultural** and **situational variables** that lead to **psychological vulnerabilities**.
2. Ward and Beech (2006) developed an **Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending**, which includes **biological, neuropsychological, and ecological** factors.
 - **Vulnerabilities** arise from the influence of **genetics, evolutionary processes** and **neurobiological processes on brain development**.

MENTALLY DISORDERED OFFENDERS

- mental disorder: “ any disorder or disability of the mind”
- While **not specified within legislation**, types of **mental disorder** include **mental illness (schizophrenia and depression), learning disability and personality disorder**, along with the **special case of psychopathic offenders**.
- **increased prevalence of mental disorder among criminal populations**
- **higher levels of offending among psychiatric populations** as compared to the general population

Why Are Mentally Disordered Offenders a Special Case?

- For a person **to be found guilty** of an offence they have to be **criminally responsible**.
 - **actus rea** (*bad act*)
 - **mens rea** (*guilty state of mind*)
 - For an individual to be found guilty, **both actus rea and mens rea must be proved**, that is,
 - (1) that the **act is an offence** and the **defendant did commit the offence**;
 - (2) that **at the time of the offence**, the **individual knew** both
 - (a) that what he was **doing was bad**,
 - (b) that what he was **doing was wrong** (i.e. **against the law**).

Mentally ill

- Mental illness includes **schizophrenia and depression**.
- **Schizophrenia** refers to a group of disorders characterised by **disturbances of perception, thought, affect and actions**. Individuals often experience **hallucinations, delusions** and **paranoia** (the psychotic symptoms of schizophrenia), and withdraw from others. The **prevalence of schizophrenia** in the general population is estimated to be **less than 1%**.

Mentally ill

- **Depression** can be split into **two types: unipolar (major) depression** and **bipolar depression**.
- Major depression is characterised by a **pervasive sad mood, feeling of guilt and self-blame, disturbed appetite, tiredness, lethargy and recurring thoughts of suicide**.
- In **bipolar depression** individuals experience **alternating periods of mania and depression**.
- **Major depression is the most common** and affects **8%** of the general population, with **bipolar** experienced by about **1%**.

Intellectual disabilities

- Individuals with **intellectual disabilities (ID)** are characterised by **impairments of intelligence and social functioning**.
- In clinical practice an **IQ of 70** is normally seen as **“borderline”**.
- An **IQ of less than 50** represents a **substantial amount of impairment**.
- **Intellectual disability** can be present **from birth** or can result from **hypoxia** (lack of oxygen) at birth, **serious illness** or **brain damage**.

Personality disorders

- A **personality disorder** is a **persistent** disorder that impacts on **how the individual relates to themselves, others** and their **environment**, leading to **major problems** in their **social functioning**.
- There are **ten personality disorders** that are classified into three categories by **DSM V** (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Personality disorders

- There are a number of **personality traits** common to many personality **disorders** that are associated with **offending**:
- **anxiety,**
- **emotional instability,**
- **insecure attachments,**
- **depressiveness,**
- **hostility,**
- **impulsivity,**
- **lack of empathy,**
- **antisocial behaviour,**
- **substance abuse.**

Psychopathy and Offending

- **Psychopathy and personality disorder are not the same thing.**
- **characteristics as defining psychopaths:**
 - **a lack of guilt and remorse,**
 - **impulsiveness,**
 - **irresponsibility,**
 - **pathological lying,**
 - **manipulativeness,**
 - **shallow affect,**
 - **egocentricity,**
 - **glibness,**
 - **superficial charm, and**
 - **a failure to learn from experience.**

Psychopathy and Offending

- A large body of research exists showing that **offenders with psychopathy are persistent and serious offenders**, with a particularly **strong relationship between psychopathy and violence**.
- However, less is known about the mechanisms of this relationship.
- **Three suggestions** have been put forward by Hart (1998), relating to **cognition, affect** and **behaviour**.

CONCLUSIONS

- **Psychology** can make an important **contribution** to our understanding of **why people offend**.
- We can inform **future developments** in both working with offenders to **reduce their likelihood** of reoffending and **designing strategies to prevent** the development of offending behaviour.