

INTRODUCTION

PART

I

Do not copy, post, or distribute

Do not copy, post, or distribute

1

INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 List examples of six to ten forensic specialties other than forensic psychology.
- 1.2 Define forensic psychology and list the five forensic psychology areas covered in the text.
- 1.3 Examine the historical development of forensic psychology, including both early and contemporary benchmarks.
- 1.4 Identify recent topics in science that have captured the interest of contemporary forensic psychologists.
- 1.5 Contrast the tasks and specialties of forensic psychologists, forensic psychiatrists, and forensic social workers.
- 1.6 Identify major ethical issues that have confronted forensic psychologists.
- 1.7 Explain why graduate training in psychology, particularly at the doctoral level, is helpful if not essential for a career in forensic psychology.
- 1.8 Compare educational and training routes to becoming a forensic psychologist.
- 1.9 List examples of practice or research for each of the five areas of forensic psychology.

After ramming his car through a crowd of people marching for social justice, and killing one woman, a man charged with this crime was evaluated by forensic psychologists to assess his competency to stand trial and his legal sanity.

A state forensic scientist testified at a murder trial that a shotgun that had been fired at a car, ultimately killing a passenger, was not defective, as the defendant in the case had claimed.

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

As all of these examples indicate, the term *forensic* refers to scientific activities pertaining or potentially pertaining to law, both civil and criminal, and perhaps to a lesser extent administrative law. 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 scientists also may consult with administrative agencies, such as by providing information to a health department about recent research relating to drug addiction.

Forensic science has become an all-encompassing professional activity and a popular career choice among students. Nearly every conceivable profession, including psychology, has a forensic specialization. Many people are confused about the various forensic areas and assume that professionals within these fields do largely the same thing, but they do not. In the opening anecdotes, only one involves psychologists. What the forensic sciences have in common, in addition to their association with the law, is that they are based on research and scientific principles. Although **forensic psychology** is the subject of this text, it is helpful to begin with a few 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—popularized in shows such as the *CSI* series, *Bones*, and *NCIS* and in many crime novels, podcasts, and even social media posts—examines the bodies of crime victims for clues about the victim's demise. 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 2020, there were 423 publicly funded forensic crime labs in the United States, existing at municipal, county, state, and federal facilities (Brooks, 2023). State-run crime labs received 60% of all requests in 2020 (Brooks, 2023). The scientists working in these laboratories 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.

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). 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 typewriters or keyboards, printers, embossers, inks, and printing processes (R. Morris, 2000).

Today, a forensic specialty in great demand 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, email, text, and voice messages on computers, online voicemail systems, tablets, and smartphones do not inevitably disappear in cyberspace, even with a 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, emails and electronic data exist in multiple locations, including the aptly named cloud, 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. 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, sexual harassment, political corruption, child pornography, identity theft, document forgery, software piracy, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, and terroristic activity.

With the rapid development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), various cloud platforms, superapps, and digital immune systems, 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), “With 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 television, movies, and popular 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.

Forensic psychology, which has been around in various forms for over 50 years, 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, and it is a career option well worth pursuing.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

For some time, the definition of forensic psychology was in flux, because scholars differed on whether it should be considered a broad or a narrow specialty. Some of the professional literature referred to forensic psychology broadly as the *research* and *application* of psychological knowledge

to the legal system, whereas some of it preferred a narrower approach, limiting forensic psychology to the *application* and *practice* of psychology as it pertains to the legal system, or, put another way, a clinical approach. As Otto and Ogloff (2014) observed, “Perhaps 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 were asked, “Are you a forensic psychologist?” many would say yes, some would say no, and a majority would probably say they really do not know. Referring to his own testimony in court back then, Brigham noted that, when asked the question, the most accurate response would be, “Well, it depends.”

A decade after Brigham’s (1999) comment, DeMatteo and colleagues (2009) noted that the lack of consensus for defining forensic psychology as well as the activities it comprises had continued. They pointed out that increasing dissatisfaction with narrow conceptualizations led the American Psychology–Law Society (AP-LS) to endorse a broad definition, particularly one that would embrace the contributions of researchers as well as clinicians. The American Board of Forensic Psychology (ABFP) also adopted a broad definition. In a later publication, DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, and colleagues (2020) also endorsed a broad definition “consistent with the definitions adopted by leading psychology and forensic psychology organizations” (p. 5). The problem with a narrow definition, they write, is that “it excludes psychologists who do not apply clinical skills, but instead conduct research in areas that are relevant to the law. As a result, researchers in areas such as social, experimental, cognitive, and developmental psychology would not be considered forensic psychologists under this narrow definition even though the results of their research can significantly influence the legal system” (p. 5).

In addition, 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)

This 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 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 youthful 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).

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 subspecialty. 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 will 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 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. 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 et al., 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 midcentury, it was not unusual to see psychologists consulting 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 professionals in submitting *amicus curiae* briefs to appellate courts, offering scientific information about topics such as the effects of discrimination or research on human development. An *amicus curiae* brief is a document submitted to an appellate court by parties who are not directly involved with the case, but who have relevant knowledge of the issues to be considered. Psychologists during that period 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 will be discussed in detail in the chapters ahead. **Table 1.1** provides selected benchmarks in the history of forensic psychology.

TABLE 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 (<i>Beiträge zur Psychologie der Aussage</i> [Contributions to the Psychology of Testimony])
1906 —Publication of a little-known work, <i>Psychology Applied to Legal Evidence and Other Constructions of Law</i> , by George Frederick Arnold.
1908 —Publication of Hugo Münsterberg's <i>On the Witness Stand</i> , 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 <i>Muller v. Oregon</i> .
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 (<i>Frye v. United States</i> , 1923) because the polygraph, as then developed, lacked general acceptance by the scientific community.
1917 —Lewis 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 (<i>State v. Driver</i> , 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 <i>Legal Psychology</i> is published—the first <i>textbook</i> 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, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .
1961 —Hans Toch edits one of the first texts on the psychology of crime, <i>Legal and Criminal Psychology</i> .
1962 —Psychologists are recognized as experts on the issue of mental illness by D.C. Court of Appeals in <i>Jenkins v. United States</i> .

TABLE 1.1 ■ Selected Historical Benchmarks Pertinent to Forensic Psychology
(Continued)

1964 —Psychologist Hans J. Eysenck formulates a comprehensive and testable theory on criminal behavior in the book <i>Crime and Personality</i> .
1968 —Martin Reiser, the first prominent full-time police psychologist in the United States, is hired by the Los Angeles Police Department. Reiser became 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 (AACP), 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 — <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> , the first peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to the interaction of psychology and law, begins publication.
1978 —The American Board of Forensic Psychology (ABFP) provides board certification in forensic psychology.
1978 —The American Psychological Association (APA) 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 (AAFP) and American Psychology–Law Society (AP-LS, Division 41 of the APA) publishes <i>Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists</i> .
2001 —The APA recognizes forensic psychology as a specialty.
2006 —The Committee on the Revision of the <i>Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychologists</i> recommends a broader definition that encompasses research as well as clinical practice.
2008 —The APA recertifies forensic psychology as a specialty.
2010 —The <i>Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Family Law Proceedings</i> are published by the APA.
2013 —The <i>Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology</i> are published.
2013 — <i>Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology</i> are published.
2013 —Police and public safety psychology (PPSP) is recognized by the APA as a specialty.
2022 —Revised <i>Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Family Law Proceedings</i> are published by the APA.

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 (ABFP), had begun in 1978 (Otto & Heilbrun, 2002). Shortly thereafter, the American Psychological Association (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 ABPP is to this day the “premier advanced credentialing (board certification) organization for forensic psychologists in the United States” (DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020, p. 5). In 2001, the APA added forensic psychology to its list of specialties. In 2010, Heilbrun and Brooks noted that forensic psychology had matured. They observed, “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.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

The field of forensic psychology has grown steadily since scholars like Heilbrun and Brooks (2012) and Packer and Grisso (2010) declared it had come of age. This 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, as well as postdoctoral fellowships; and the establishment of standards for practitioners working in the discipline.

The practice of forensic psychology is evident in numerous contexts. There is no shortage of comprehensive handbooks and practical articles offering advice to students interested in careers in this field or professionals interested in expanding their services to this area (Baker & Gottlieb, 2023; Brodsky, 2023; DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020; Finkelman & Gomberg, 2022; Thomson & Frumkin, 2023).

An important recent change is the rise in the use of telepsychology, which very simply is the delivery of psychological services through telecommunications technology. The APA (2013d) has formerly endorsed a much more detailed definition, but for our purposes here note that telepsychology may involve virtual meetings, emails, videoconferences, chats, blogs, social media platforms, and more. Psychologists in general have turned to telepsychology over the past 20 years, and forensic psychology is not an exception (Batastini et al., 2023; Dale & Smith, 2021; Kois et al., 2021). With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, and its accompanying widespread isolation, including closures of public facilities and nonessential services, more telepsychology became essential. As Kois et al. (2021) put it, mental health practitioners, researchers, and policymakers faced unprecedented hurdles for continuing their work, and telepsychology was “the logical solution put into practice” (p. 1).

Still another area of change is the adaptation to AI tools, such as various algorithms and chatbots. On a worldwide basis, AI is here to stay, and psychologists are not only using it but also studying its benefits and harms (Z. Abrams, 2023, 2024a). Benefits include but are not limited to aid in data gathering and collaboration across disciplines, while harms include but are not limited to evidence of racial and age discrimination in some AI tools and their use by children and adolescents. We will revisit issues surrounding AI in subsequent chapters (see also **Focus 1.1**).

FOCUS 1.1: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: PLUSES AND MINUSES

Algorithms and chatbots flood the technology world, and scholars today often emphasize that the world must adapt to and understand them.

Artificial intelligence (AI)—along with many of its specialized tools—is here to stay. OpenAI, which is freely available across the globe, has been both praised and critiqued, and AI in general has not escaped the attention of forensic psychologists, including commentators, practitioners, and researchers.

Forensic psychologists and other mental health professionals meet AI in a variety of contexts. Here are just a few tasks they perform:

- Train psychologists to interview witnesses, including children.
- Prepare reports that are submitted to courts.
- Recommend ChatGPT sessions to patients in therapy.
- Perform administrative tasks, such as scheduling appointments.
- Recommend whether suspects should be granted bail.
- Recommend sentences to judges.
- Review research on sexual offending, domestic violence, or services for older adults.

As Zara Abrams (2023, 2024a) has noted, psychologists have much to contribute to this topic. They can and have researched AI itself, such as understanding it, understanding people's reactions to it, and studying its harms and benefits.

Some developers of AI technology have expressed concerns about its widespread use and possible misuse, but it is nonetheless likely to proliferate. Neuropsychologists, for example, can research how AI can be advanced to mimic human neurons, moving toward sophisticated generalized AI. Clearly, scholars across different disciplines (mental health, law, engineering, and the arts, for example) must stay attuned.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the most salient strengths and weaknesses of AI as it relates to the work of forensic psychologists?
2. Some college professors say ChatGPT encourages students to cheat, and some professors cite research that students are less interested in a topic if they use AI to gather information. Are these valid concerns? How can the use of ChatGPT be controlled in writing essays or term papers?

Here are just a few examples of things that forensic psychologists may be asked to do, in addition to working in academic settings.

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.
- Help attorneys in preparing witnesses to testify in criminal and civil cases.
- Perform evaluations of a defendant's competency to stand trial.
- Testify as an expert witness 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.
- Provide services to schools and workplaces for dealing with the aftereffects of mass shootings.
- Develop a psychological measure for assessing risk of harm to self or others among persons with mental illness.

Victimology and Victim Services

- Provide support to 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, workers' compensation, or disability.
- Educate and train victim service providers on psychological reactions to criminal victimization, such as posttraumatic 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.

In addition, forensic psychologists teach in colleges and universities and as mentioned earlier conduct research that is relevant to the legal system. Research activities also may be associated with organizations, such as the Federal Judicial Center or the National Center for State Courts.

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)

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY, FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY, AND FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK

Some of the tasks we have listed are performed by mental health professionals who are not psychologists, most particularly psychiatrists or social workers. Increasingly, these three groups of professionals—forensic psychologists, forensic psychiatrists, and forensic social workers—work in collaboration. For example, clinical, counseling, and forensic psychologists, along with psychiatrists, all provide direct assessment and consulting services in many contexts (Neal & Grisso, 2014). However, it is important to point out some of the differences among them.

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, Idaho, Colorado, and Utah enacted similar legislation in 2016, 2017, 2023, and 2024, respectively. It should be noted that the criteria for gaining prescriptive authority or privileges vary among these states. 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. S. Curtis et al. (2023) provide a helpful historical account of prescriptive authority given to psychologists as well as recommendations for training and licensure. Others (e.g., P. Hughes et al., 2024) also point to a nationwide shortage of prescription providers and advocate more licensure of this sort to ensure greater access to mental health care. We must emphasize that not all psychologists support expanded prescriptive authority, however, a topic that will reappear in later chapters. Many psychiatrists, like psychologists, work in a variety of forensic settings, including the court, correctional facilities, and law enforcement, but especially the court. 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 will 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 et al., 2019). In Canada, psychiatrists perform the majority of both fitness-to-stand-trial and criminal responsibility evaluations (Roesch et al., 2019). Roesch et al. (2019) and others (e.g., Seto, 2021) have argued persuasively for a change in Canada’s criminal code that would facilitate psychology’s entry into this service. As of 2024, however, this has not been done, although Canadian psychologists have made extensive contributions to research, assessment, and treatment of forensic populations (Goldenson et al., 2023).

In the United States and other countries, psychologists routinely carry out 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. Forensic neuropsychology, as a matter of fact, is a very rapidly growing specialty, as we will demonstrate in chapters ahead. 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. It is not unusual for psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers to join in submitting amicus curiae briefs to appellate courts, a topic we will address in Chapter 4.

ETHICAL ISSUES

With the increasing opportunities available to forensic psychologists, numerous pragmatic and ethical issues also have been raised (Bush et al., 2020). They include dual relationships between the psychologist and the client, the assessment of psychopathy, telepsychology, 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). Most of these issues face all psychologists, not only forensic psychologists, however.

In recent years, critical ethical issues also 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).

At times lack of understanding may result in bias, a topic we discuss shortly. Perhaps more often it reflects lack of training or experience, and this interferes with high-quality forensic work. A good example is forensic work that involves the Deaf community. Persons who are Deaf come into contact with the justice system as witnesses, victims, suspects, defendants, and offenders. Feldman et al. (2023) review a number of areas in which they may be at a disadvantage, such as understanding their Miranda rights or being misinterpreted as angry, hostile, or paranoid,

to give just a few examples. Scholars beginning to give attention to this important group (e.g., Feldman et al., 2023; Pollard & Berlinski, 2017) do not consider mental health practitioners biased. However, “A psychologist who does not understand or follow the rules of Deaf culture (disclosure of personal information, eye contact) may alienate or frustrate the Deaf examinee and lessen motivation” (Feldman et al., 2023, p. 255).

Like all psychologists, forensic psychologists are expected to practice in accordance with the **Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (EPPCC)** (APA, 2017a), which includes five general principles and 10 standards. The latter are mandatory rules that psychologists who are members of the APA 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 APA, should be consulted. We will visit these guidelines as they relate to material in the chapters ahead. For the present, we will focus on one issue that has attracted considerable research interest (LaFortune, 2022; Neal et al., 2022).

Bias

Virtually no one is free of **bias**, simply defined as a preference for one thing over another. Psychological research has discussed cognitive bias as a general construct but also has identified certain types. These include but are not limited to hindsight bias, confirmation bias, bias blind spot, moral disengagement, adversarial allegiance, and cross-cultural, racial, and gender bias. In chapters ahead we illustrate some of these biases in operation.

Forensic psychologists and other health professionals cannot be expected to be free of biases, but ethically they should be aware of them within themselves and take steps to avoid them and, better yet, cure themselves of them in their interactions with others. As LaFortune (2022) notes, biases “have not been rigorously studied for potential negative effects on forensic mental health expert opinions across different contexts” (p. 47). Neal et al. (2022), after a systematic search of studies of bias, also noted that effective de-biasing strategies are sorely needed.

Although each of the aforementioned types is an important bias to address, cultural, racial, and gender bias seem particularly crucial in today’s society. In the United States, for example, the population comprises a very wide variety of cultural groups, and their cultural norms often influence their behavior. Consequently, the measurement of some psychological constructs (like anxiety or malingering) can be affected. Some groups discourage direct eye contact with authority figures, for example, and some perceive males as heads of households. Brodsky (2023) urges forensic psychologists to be aware of these norms and knowledgeable about research in this area when assessing individuals.

Finally, other professionals with whom the forensic psychologist interacts may hold explicit or implicit biases against certain groups. A law enforcement officer may be biased against Black men, a corrections officer may be biased against female offenders, a judge deciding a custody issue may be biased against persons who identify as gender neutral or persons in same-sex relationships, and a lawyer choosing members of a jury may be biased against Black women. These are but a few examples. Forensic psychologists cannot remove the bias from those with whom they interact, but they must be alert to their existence.

PSYCHOLOGY AS A PROFESSION

Since the 1970s, there has been an enormous expansion of the profession of psychology in general (Reed et al., 2001) as well as forensic psychology specifically (DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020; DeMatteo & Scherr, 2023; 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. Today, areas as diverse as neuropsychology and development of AI have captured researchers and practitioners, and telepsychology has expanded the field even more. The field in 20 years has gone far beyond the point when it was stated correctly that psychologists could 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).

Many but not all psychologists are members of the **American Psychological Association (APA)**, which comprised approximately 157,000 in 2023, including educators, clinicians, researchers, and students. The APA, based in Washington, DC, is the largest association of psychologists worldwide.

The second largest psychological organization in the United States is the **Association for Psychological Science (APS)**, also based in Washington, DC. It is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of scientific psychology and had 33,000 members in 2023.

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 were about 7,000 members of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) in 2022. 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 65,000 members and subscribers in 2022.

Education and Training

Students 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 master’s-level psychologist (MacKain et al., 2002). The most common master’s degrees in psychology are in clinical, counseling, school, or industrial/organizational 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. However, state licensing boards typically require a minimum of a doctoral degree in psychology from an accredited institution.

In addition to coursework at the undergraduate and master’s level, various types of internships provide students with valuable opportunities to learn more about the field. As students pursue doctoral-level training, the internships become more advanced and involve 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 psychology, biopsychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, and industrial/organizational psychology.

The last four represent the more applied or practitioner's side of psychology. Recently, as we will see shortly, 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 et al., 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 et al., 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.

While obtaining either a PhD or a PsyD requires motivation and persistence, 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

By 1977, every U.S. state had laws relating to the licensure of psychologists (Tucillo et al., 2002), 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). At that time, every state required that within 30 years all individuals who practice psychology must be licensed (DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020).

One of the chief criteria to qualify for licensing is possession of the doctoral degree. Professional psychologists who belong to the APA 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, 2010, 2017a). Nevertheless, some states have adopted these standards in their statutes; thus, even if they do not belong to the APA, psychologists practicing in these jurisdictions are expected to comply.

Guidelines are also offered in a number of areas associated with research and clinical practice. A good example is the APA (2022) *Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Family Law Proceedings*. Another is the *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology* (APA, 2013c), and still another is the telepsychology guidelines (APA, 2013d). 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 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.

The Applied Specialties

After obtaining their doctoral degrees, many psychologists, including forensic psychologists, obtain postdoctoral training in a specialty area for 1 or 2 years (Kopelovich et al., 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. (See Table 1.2 for current specialties of professional psychology that have been recognized by the APA.)

TABLE 1.2 ■ Specialties in Professional Psychology and Year of Initial Recognition by the APA

Specialty	Year of APA Recognition
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
Clinical Psychopharmacology	2020

Other groups, such as the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP), recognize specialties as well. As should be apparent from **Table 1.2**, 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 of 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. In the early 21st century, the percentage of individuals representing diverse groups rose to 16.4% (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2018). Thus psychologists not only are encountering in their practices more persons of Latino, Asian, Native American, and Middle Eastern heritage, but they are themselves reflecting multicultural groups.

FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY AS A SPECIALTY

Education and Training Requirements

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. For example, criminal justice majors, sociology majors, and political science majors often enroll in these classes. A similar pattern exists in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia (Helmus et al., 2011; Pillay et al., 2019). Most recently, Pillay et al. (2019) 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.

Growth in the field also 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. In 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, during about the same time period, it was estimated that 41 institutions offered 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 et al., 2012, p. 49). In addition, 25 forensic psychology postdoctoral fellowships were identified in the United States by the end of the first two decades of the 21st century (Kopelovich et al., 2019). It should be emphasized that a person does not need to attend a graduate program in forensic psychology to be a forensic psychologist. There are multiple avenues available, such as postdoctoral experience, postdoctoral training, and further coursework.

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 an 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).

It is also 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, criminology, and criminal justice, among others, have forensic concentrations that provide

students with academic and training opportunities in forensic psychology, whether through specific coursework 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, 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 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—also known as the Specialty Council of Police and Public Safety Psychology—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), although some programs now offer forensic internships in correctional settings (Potts & Kois, 2023). 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; Magaletta et al., 2023). In both the United States and Canada, however, more aggressive efforts are now made to recruit graduate students into practice that will be of benefit to both their future careers and the institutions they serve during these internship experiences (Magaletta et al., 2017; Olver et al., 2011).

TABLE 1.3 ■ Recommended Components for Doctoral-Level Forensic Psychology Training Programs

Component
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).

Finally, it is important to mention that students with psychology backgrounds often enroll in doctoral programs that confer degrees in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, and social work. Although they are not psychologists, the professors, practitioners, and researchers with such doctoral degrees make significant contributions to this field. Moreover, these graduate programs often include PhD or PsyD psychologists on their faculty.

Certification

As noted, all 50 states today require practicing psychologists to be licensed. Some also require certification in specific areas, such as forensic psychology (DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020). Virtually all of the laws relating to certification in various states were passed after the year 2000, which is testament to the growth in this field. Heilbrun and Brooks (2010) have published a helpful table summarizing these statutes, and DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al. (2020) provide valuable information on both licensing and certification. For readers interested in a career in forensic psychology, DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al.'s 2020 book is highly readable and filled with practical advice.

Certification in forensic psychology is required in only a small number of states, but it can add stature to the credentials of individuals, particularly those who testify in courts. On a national level, the predominant organization that provides board certification in forensic psychology (as well as 14 other specialty areas) is the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). Interestingly, police and public safety psychology, which falls within our broad definition of forensic psychology, is one of these specialty areas. 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. 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], special unit evaluations); (2) clinical intervention (e.g., postshooting incidents, line-of-duty deaths counseling, deep undercover stress reactions); (3) operational support (e.g., hostage negotiation, criminal activity analyses); and (4) organizational consulting (e.g., gender and ethnic/minority issues, excessive force concerns, police corruption problems, workplace stressors). Each of these will be covered in more detail in Chapter 2.

Police psychologists are sometimes left out of the umbrella category of forensic psychologist, and some do not consider themselves as 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. It is, after all, law enforcement that plays a significant role in dealing with courts and the judicial system in general.

In the early years, the term *police psychology* was used almost extensively, 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. Scholars often mark the beginning of the psychology and police relationship at 1917, when psychologist 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 et al., 2014, p. 444). Scrivner and colleagues (2014) add that, “initially, 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” (p. 444). 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.

Nevertheless, the relationship between police and the public is complicated, and there are many contemporary issues involving racism and use of force that must be addressed. We cover this in Chapter 2. For the present, it is stressed that recruitment, the adequacy of training, and behavior on the job are topics that police and public safety psychologists cannot ignore in their interactions with law enforcement. They will continue to perform psychological services and routine duties, including assessments, evaluations, and clinical and research support to individuals at all levels of law enforcement work. However, these services 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, 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 will 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 our streets or transmitting messages to those they supervise.

Psychologists also may be asked to do investigative-type activities, such as criminal profiling or psychological autopsies, or consult with law enforcement on approaches to interviewing witnesses or victims. “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 programs offer courses and even internships in the field. It is best for students interested to earn a doctorate in psychology (especially clinical, counseling, or industrial/organizational) and, while in the graduate program, to work with a faculty member who 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 to become highly familiar with the nature, policies, and procedures of law enforcement work as well as police culture, which often varies, depending upon the agency. All of this is discussed in more detail in the following two chapters.

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. Thus, legal psychologists can be found conducting research as well as assessing defendants and testifying in criminal and civil proceedings. They also provide advice to lawyers, especially as it pertains to jury selection or recommending expert witnesses.

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 state or federal agencies and research facilities like the Federal Judicial Center, the National Center for State Courts, 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 want 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 et al., 2003; Kassin & Kiechel, 1996; Loftus, 2004). Loftus (2004) 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 1.2 that

couple and family psychology itself is a specialty area, recognized by the APA in 2002. Family forensic psychology was first highlighted in 2003, when the *Journal of Family Psychology* published a special issue devoted to the intersection of family psychology and family law (Grossman & Okun, 2003). Since that time, the field has developed rapidly, including but not limited to research and clinical practice in such areas as child custody, adoptions, evaluation of parenting plans, elder law, and many others that will be covered in detail in chapters ahead. Family forensic psychologists themselves publish accounts of their experiences, review relevant research, and offer advice to their colleagues on a wide range of issues relating to family law (e.g., Bow & Gottlieb, 2021; Datchi, 2022; L. Greenberg, 2019; H. King, 2018).

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. However, in 2023, the Court overturned a long-standing precedent established in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) that there was a Constitutional right to abortion (*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 2022). The controversial *Dobbs* decision was followed by legal changes in many states either to enshrine the right to abortion in *state* constitutions or to place further restrictions on this practice.

These rapidly developing legal and social changes 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. In 2023, 10 states allowed medical aid in dying, by which patients with terminal diseases and given typically 6 months to live could obtain medication to end their life on their own terms. The statutes allowing this include many stipulations that we discuss in detail in a later chapter. Not surprisingly, family forensic psychologists and other mental health practitioners may be actively involved in all of these issues.

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 freedom; 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 addition to the examples mentioned earlier, mediation, visitation, and even the impact of imprisonment on families are relevant. In this capacity, family forensic psychologists have a good opportunity to educate both legal professionals and families themselves.

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 their 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. For children and adolescents, belonging to a group is beneficial to psychological functioning (Benson, 2002). When the 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. However, destructive behavior also may be well planned. School shooters, mass shooters, and persons who carry out attempted assassinations frequently express a sense of social isolation and rejection, but their actions may be carefully thought out.

Researchers have also found, however, that well-designed and carefully executed prevention programs can prevent violence and a lifelong career path of crime. We will cover such programs in the chapters on crime and delinquency.

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. Today, victims often prefer to be called survivors, a noun that suggests that they are more in control of their lives than “victimhood” would suggest. Survivors, in fact, have advocated strongly for social changes in society and in the law. Examples include families of victims of mass shootings, survivors of those shootings, and survivors of sexual assaults. Gun safety groups have brought about changes in gun laws, and persons who were sexually assaulted have brought about changes that allow them to report the abuse or sue their accusers many years after an attack. Although we appreciate someone’s wish to be considered a survivor rather than a victim, we continue to use the latter term because it is consistently used in research and scholarly literature.

Violent victimization of children, such as 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 et al., 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. For example, victim service providers delivered an average of 27 different services to meet the needs of crime victims in 2019 (Thompson et al, 2021). About two out of three victims of crime received case management, which involved facilitating communication between victims and criminal justice system personnel, including connections

to psychological treatment services and other victim services providers. These activities will be covered in greater depth in Chapters 10, 11, and 12.

Colleges and universities now routinely offer courses, majors, and concentrations in victimology. Students wanting 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 (master of social work). 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 partner, child, and elder abuse have especially grown in recent years, and federal and state legislation has broadened the scope of understanding and services for victims

Correctional Psychology

Correctional psychology is a vibrant branch of forensic psychology and one in which multiple career opportunities are available, in both adult and juvenile systems. However, like police and public service 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). Some are also 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. As some prominent correctional psychologists have observed, “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 directed not only at forensic programs, but at doctoral-level programs in psychology in general.

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 2021, there were 5,444,900 adults under correctional supervision in the United States (Carson & Kluckow, 2023a). This figure includes adults who were in prison, in jail, or supervised in the community, as on probation or parole. The overall number represents a decline since 2009, when a decrease in the population was first noted, but declines in recent years have been very small—1.0% from 2020. Placed in a different context, the official statistics indicate that 1 in 48 adults is under some form of correctional supervision. Nevertheless, the number of persons *incarcerated* is beginning to decrease, as states are saving costs by closing prisons, reducing sentences, and developing more alternatives to imprisonment, particularly for nonviolent offenders.

The number of juveniles incarcerated in U.S. adult prisons or jails has declined from a peak of 10,420 in 2008 to a low of 2,250 in 2021 (Zeng et al., 2023). These data, along with the policy changes that explain them, will be addressed again in Chapter 13.

Conditions in many jails, prison, and juvenile facilities are deteriorating, however, and they are beset with crises that range from health issues, to violence, to staff shortages. In addition, the large number of persons with diagnosed mental illness in the nation's jails and prisons is of increasing concern to psychologists as well as other mental health professionals. More than 70% of individuals in U.S. jails and prisons have at least one diagnosed mental illness or substance abuse disorder or both, and about one-third have a serious mental disorder (Warth, 2022). The conditions of confinement often exacerbate already existing problems. For example, extended stays in isolation or hostility toward prisoners because of their race, ethnicity, or gender present challenges not only to the prisoner but also to the mental health professional.

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 parents or persons with mental illness, the effects of crowding, the effects of isolation, and the outcome of various rehabilitative programs.

As noted, juvenile corrections is a related but also distinct area and will be covered 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 deficiencies.

Interestingly, psychologists who practice in adult as well as juvenile correctional settings are sometimes criticized for aligning themselves with 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. The above are all controversial topics that will be covered in later chapters.

Psychologists working in and as consultants to correctional facilities often join associations representing their common interests. Examples are the American Correctional Association

(ACA) and the International Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP). The latter is guided by a series of standards (Althouse, 2010) that provide the minimum acceptable levels for psychological services offered to offenders, whether they are adults or juveniles held in local, state, or federal facilities, as well as in the community. The standards cover a wide range of principles as well as services, including staffing requirements, confidentiality issues, mental health screening, professional development, informed consent, segregation, and a host of other topics relating to this work.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Forty 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, often used interchangeably with legal psychology and psychology and law. For many years there was also disagreement over how broadly or narrowly the term should be defined; should it cover clinical work in direct service to courts and other judicial entities, or should it include research and practice in areas that may or may not ever reach a courtroom setting? The debate appears to be resolved in favor of a broad definition. 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; DeMatteo, Fairfax-Columbo, et al., 2020; Heilbrun & Brooks, 2010; Weiner & Otto, 2014, recognize the importance of contributions from researchers, although there continues to be emphasis placed on practice.

After contrasting forensic psychology with other forensic sciences, the chapter covered topics affecting general psychology today, such as ethical issues and education and training for careers. The chapter then focused on forensic psychology as a specialty area recognized by the American Psychological Association in 2001. Adopting a broad definition, we divided it into five subareas for organizational purposes and covered tasks and issues associated with forensic psychologists in each one.

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, social, 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 provides ample opportunities for psychologists interested in interacting with some aspect of the law. It has developed rapidly and shows no signs of stagnation. Fifteen years 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)	Forensic psychiatrists
American Psychology-Law Society (APLS)	Forensic psychology
Association for Psychological Science (APS)	Forensic social workers
Bias	Legal psychology
Correctional psychology	Police and public safety psychology (PPSP)
Digital investigative analysis (DIA)	Psychology of crime and delinquency
Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (EPPCC)	Questioned document examination or analysis <i>Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology</i>
Family forensic psychology	Victimology

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Contrast forensic psychology with other forensic sciences.
2. Identify the five subspecialties of forensic psychology covered in this text, and provide illustrations of the contributions of forensic psychologists in each one.
3. Explain the difference between the PhD and PsyD degrees.
4. Give examples of any four ethical issues that might be faced by psychologists practicing forensic psychology.

Do not copy, post, or distribute