

FOUNDATIONS OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION

SHARON CASEY, ANDREW DAY, JAMES VESS
AND TONY WARD

Foundations of Offender Rehabilitation

‘This book forges a much-neglected link between etiological theories and rehabilitation models, risk assessment, formulation and treatment planning. It provides an integrated resource that will improve the conceptual competence of those in training, post-qualification professionals who are looking to make the transition into forensic practice and programme designers alike’.

Devon Polaschek, *Associate Professor, Criminal Justice Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.*

The past three decades have seen dramatic changes in the way in which the criminal justice system responds to those who break the law. The old claim in the field of correctional psychology that ‘nothing works’ has strongly been refuted in the face of evidence that rehabilitation programmes do make a difference. The graduate student in forensic psychology could easily be overwhelmed by the plethora of information now available.

This new textbook offers a comprehensive approach to forensic and correctional psychology, demonstrating how theory and practice can be applied and integrated. Written by internationally recognized experts within the field, the authors guide the reader through the core theories and concepts that underpin forensic practice within the legal systems of different countries (UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Singapore), show how this knowledge informs current thinking in offender rehabilitation and reintegration and provide a series of case studies looking at sexual offenders, female offenders, juveniles and offenders with mental disorders.

This book is the perfect overview for graduate students of forensic and correctional psychology engaged with offender rehabilitation and assessment and the psychology of law.

Sharon Casey is a Senior Lecturer at Deakin University and member of the Clinical Forensic Group within the Deakin Forensic Psychology Centre.

Andrew Day is Professor in Forensic Psychology and Director of the Forensic Psychology Centre at Deakin University.

James Vess has over 25 years of clinical and research experience with forensic populations. He is a Senior Lecturer and a member of the Forensic Psychology Centre at Deakin University.

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James Vess and Tony Ward**

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Foreword

The field of offender rehabilitation has undergone a process of substantial change over the years, from an early period of largely atheoretical and empirically unsubstantiated optimism, through assertions that nothing works to a focus on what works for contributing to positive changes in offenders and reductions in recidivism. Relatively recent evidence suggests that certain types of interventions can have a significant effect in reducing reoffending and managing the risk posed by some types of offenders, although general recidivism rates remain high for many offenders, as well as for certain known subgroups within offender populations such as violent and sexual offenders. Despite a burgeoning professional literature on offender rehabilitation, what has often been missing is an explicit articulation of the theoretical underpinnings of offender rehabilitation, and the development of assessment and intervention approaches that are clearly based on these theories. In this book we review a variety of theories of offending behaviour and current models of offender rehabilitation. This is followed by a consideration of available theories of behaviour change. This is an area that we believe is sometimes insufficiently utilized in attempts to develop and implement effective rehabilitation programmes with offenders.

The theoretical and empirical framework for offender rehabilitation should also guide forensic assessment and case formulation. In this book we provide an approach to the assessment of offenders that draws from available theoretical and empirical sources of information. But assessment is optimally useful only when it is integrated into an aetiologically explanatory case formulation for the offender being assessed. Consideration is therefore given to the development of effective case formulation, which should always form the basis for treatment planning, intervention and ongoing risk management.

The second half of the book applies the approach developed in the first half to specific populations of offenders. The chapter on sex offenders presents the fundamentals of current risk assessment practice, and considerations of applying assessment findings and case formulation to sex offender treatment. This is followed by a similar set of considerations for the assessment, case formulation and intervention with violent offenders. Substance abuse is a common and widespread phenomenon among offenders of all types and a chapter is, therefore, devoted to examining the current state of knowledge in the assessment and

treatment of this set of problem behaviours. Female offenders have historically made up a relatively small portion of the total offender population, but their involvement in the criminal justice system is nonetheless substantial and may be growing. The chapter on female offenders considers the unique characteristics and concerns presented by this group, as does the following chapter considering a practice approach to the assessment and treatment of young offenders. Finally, the special needs and specific challenges of mentally disordered offenders are discussed. Each chapter includes a detailed case example to illustrate the approach to assessment, case formulation and rehabilitation that we are advocating.

The final chapter of the book presents some of the unique features of professional practice in the area of offender rehabilitation. Working in this area requires that the practitioner not only possess a solid set of clinical skills, but also specialized knowledge and awareness of the criminal justice context in which any work occurs. Consideration must be given to the special nature of informed consent, confidentiality, role boundaries and professional ethics when working with offenders. Our intent in writing this book is to present a specifically focused resource to the developing and practising professional that articulates the link between the theoretical and empirical foundations of offender rehabilitation, and provides a practical approach to working in this challenging but important field. We hope that you will find it a useful resource.

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