

# **FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

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**School of Social Sciences**  
**Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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### Acknowledgement

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Unit 2	Role and Functions of Forensic Psychologist	Prof. Dipesh Chandra Nath (Adapted from Unit 4, Block 1 of BPCE021).
Unit 3	Assessment and Evaluation in Forensic Psychology	Dr. Bibha Rani (Adapted from Unit 3, Bloc 3 of BPCE021)
<b>Block 2</b>	<b>Criminal Psychology</b>	
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Unit 5	Theories Applied to Criminal Psychology	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 6	Offender Typologies and Criminal Profiling	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
<b>Block 3</b>	<b>Police, Investigative and Correctional Psychology</b>	
Unit 7	Police Psychology	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 8	Investigative Psychology	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 9	Eye-witness and Witness Protection	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 10	Correctional Psychology	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
<b>Block 4</b>	<b>Areas of Application of Forensic Psychology</b>	
Unit 11	Applications of Forensic Psychology in Civil and Criminal Proceedings	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 12	Forensic Psychology and Child Related Issues	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan

Unit 13	Juvenile Delinquency	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 14	Psychopathology of Homicide	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 15	Dynamics of Serial Killings	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan
Unit 16	Public Policy and Forensic Psychology	Prof. Vimala Veeraraghavan and Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar

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## **BPCE142: FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

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The course on Forensic Psychology (BPCE142) is an elective course offered in VI Semester of BA Psychology Honours Programme, under Bachelors Degree Programme of IGNOU. The course is of 06 Credits. The course is divided into four blocks. The main objectives of this course to explain the key concepts of forensic psychology and its application to law, to delineate the roles and functions of forensic psychologist and to introduce the applications of forensic psychology to policing, crime and civil cases

Each of these blocks represents a specific theme which is discussed in terms of units. The units are arranged in a logical sequence so as to cover the main aspects of each theme. Before proceeding to read the units, you are advised to go through instructions about how to read the course material. Given below is the explanation of the organization and sequencing of the unit.

### **Organization and Sequencing of a Unit**

The following is the structure of each unit:

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Section (Theme of the section)

1.2.1 Subsection of 1 .....

#### **Check Your Progress I**

1.3 Section (Theme of the section)

1.3.1 Subsection of 2 .....

#### **Check Your Progress II**

Let Us Sum Up

References

Key Words

Answers to Check Your Progress

Unit End Questions

As the scheme suggests, each unit is divided into sections for easy reading and better comprehension. The numbering and length of each section and subsection may vary from one unit to the other, depending upon the depth of information in each unit. Each section is indicated by **BOLD CAPITALS** and each sub-section by a **relatively smaller but bold typeface**. Divisions within the sub-sections are in **relatively smaller bold typeface** so as to make it easy for you to understand.

Let us now discuss each section of a unit.

### **Objectives**

We begin each unit with the section Objectives. It tells you briefly about the objectives of the unit and what you will learn after you study the unit.

### **Introduction**

The section Introduction will mainly focus on introducing the theme of the unit.

### **Illustration**

There are several illustrations in each unit in the form of figures and diagrams. The main purpose of these illustrations is to make the study comprehensive and interesting.

## **Check Your Progress**

We have given self-check exercises under the caption Check Your Progress at the end of main sections. You can provide your answers in the space given below each question/ exercise.

You will be tempted to have a glance of the main text as soon as you come across an exercise. But we do hope that you will resist this temptation and turn to the main text only after completing the answers.

You should read each unit and note the important points in the margin provided in the course material. This will help in your study. It will also help you to answer the self-check exercises and the assignment questions, as well as help in revising your course before appearing for Term End Examination (TEE).

## **Let Us Sum Up**

Let Us Sum Up summarises the whole unit for the purpose of ready reference and recapitulation.

## **References**

We have given a list of references at the end of each unit. This is a list of books and articles used by the course writers to prepare the units. This reflects that your course material is based on a wide spectrum of literature available on a particular theme, related to your course. This also informs you of the wide literature available in the particular area of study. If interested in widening your knowledge, you may look for the mentioned references. Each reference mentions the name of the author, year of publication, title of the book/article, name of publisher and place of publication.

Further readings help you to increase your level of understanding of a particular theme in each unit.

## **Key Words**

The key words at the end of the unit explain the basic ideas, technical terms and difficult words.

## **Answers to Check Your Progress**

Answers to Check Your Progress are given under this section.

## **Unit End Questions**

Besides Check Your Progress, we have given Unit End Questions in each unit. Practicing these questions will help you in answering assignments and Term End Examination. Though the pattern and style of questions asked may not be similar.

## **Audio and Video Aids**

Some units have been selected for the audio and video programmes to supplement the printed material. These will help you to understand the units with greater clarity.

Apart from this, you may also access IGNOU's FM radio channel, Gyanvani (105.6 FM), which is available across many cities in India, for regular programmes, related to themes on Psychology. You can listen to the live discussions by faculty and experts on the topic of the day and interact with them through telephone, email, and through chat mode.

You may also watch Gyandarshan TV channel (free to air educational channel), for programmes related to topics on Psychology. The schedule of Gyanvani and Gyandarshan is displayed on [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in). The radio and

TV channels may also be accessed on Gyandhara, webcast facility for Gyanvani and Gyandarshan, provided by the University.

### **Assignment**

You will receive a set of assignments for the whole programme. These are Tutor Marked Assignments, which are to be submitted to the respective Study Centre after completion. These assignments will be evaluated by academic counsellor(s) from your Study Centre. Ensure that you complete all your assignments because the grades that you get in each of these assignments are included in the final evaluation of your degree. Before answering the assignments, read all the units and additional material (if available).

### **Guidelines for assignments**

While working on the assignments, kindly ensure the following points:

- 1) Clearly write your Enrollment number
- 2) Answer them in your handwriting and in your own words (do not copy the sentences from the course material or any other source).
- 3) Write clearly and neatly so that it is easy to read your answers
- 4) Leave margins on one side of your answer-sheets so that evaluator may write his/ her comments on your performance.
- 5) Organise your answers well based on the question asked.
- 6) You will submit the assignments at your Study Centre on or before the date mentioned as per the admission cycle. Kindly check the dates from [www.ignou.ac.in](http://www.ignou.ac.in) or your Regional Centre website.

### **Term End Examination (TEE)**

Consider the following points while answering TEE.

- 1) Questions need to be answered in **one's own words** and they need to be focused based on the questions asked.
- 2) Answer the questions keeping in mind the word limit.
- 3) Organise answers well based on the questions asked and also keep in mind any bifurcation given in the marks.
- 4) Ensure that you mention correct question numbers for respective answers.

### **Preparation of Course Material**

The syllabus of course material BPCE142 is designed by an Expert Committee (see page 2 of this course) and prepared by Course Preparation Team which comprises the author(s) of units, content editor(s), language editor, and the course coordinator. The expert committee selected the themes and sub-themes of the blocks and units, keeping in view the prescribed syllabi of UGC (CBCS model). The authors of units have provided their expertise in elaborating them in the form of the main text of each unit. The content editor has carefully examined the course contents and has made an attempt to make the material clear and comprehensible.

For any query or feedback related to the course, you may kindly contact the course coordinator at:

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## **COURSE CONTENT**

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### **BLOCK 1 FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION**

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#### **Unit 1 Introduction to Forensic Psychology**

Nature and Scope of Forensic Psychology

Sub-specialities in Forensic Psychology

Ethical Issues in Forensic Psychology.

#### **Unit 2 Role and Functions of Forensic Psychologist**

Forensic Psychologist's Role and Functions

Qualifications and Training

#### **Unit 3 Assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology**

Role of Assessment and Evaluation in Forensic Psychology

Assessment, Tests and Evaluation in Forensic Psychology

Personality Testing in Forensic Psychology

### **BLOCK 2 CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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#### **Unit 4 Introduction to Criminal Psychology**

Nature and Scope of Criminal Psychology

Difference between Forensic and Criminal Psychology

#### **Unit 5 Theories Applied to Criminal Psychology**

Psychological Theories

Biological and Integrated Theories

#### **Unit 6 Offender Typologies and Criminal Profiling**

Offender Typologies

Forensic Psychology and Crime Investigation

### **BLOCK 3 POLICE, INVESTIGATIVE AND CORRECTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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#### **Unit 7 Police Psychology**

Police Psychology: An Introduction

Police Personality

Police Stress

Police and Human Relations

Police and Special Population

#### **Unit 8 Investigative Psychology**

Truth and Deception

Police Interrogation and Truth

Techniques of Interrogation

#### **Unit 9 Eye-witness and Witness Protection**

Meaning of Eyewitness and Eyewitness Assessment

Children as Eyewitness

Eyewitness Evidence

Witness Protection

**Unit 10 Correctional Psychology**

Correctional Psychology: An Introduction

Role of a Forensic Psychologist in the context of Correctional Psychology

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**BLOCK IV AREAS OF APPLICATION OF FORENSIC  
PSYCHOLOGY**

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**Unit 11 Applications of Forensic Psychology in Civil and Criminal Proceedings**

Forensic Psychology and Law

Forensic Psychology in Civil and Criminal law

Forensic Psychology and Assessment of Civil and Criminal Competency

Criminal Responsibility and Insanity Defence

**Unit 12 Forensic Psychology and Child related issues**

Child Sexual Abuse and Role of Forensic Psychologists

Child's Rights When Testifying

Child Custody and Related Issues

**Unit 13 Juvenile Delinquency**

What is Juvenile Delinquency?

Risk Factors Contributing to Delinquency

Role of Forensic Psychologist in Delinquency Cases

**Unit 14 Psychopathology of Homicide**

Homicide and Heinous Crimes

Psycho-diagnostics of Homicides among Youth and Adults

**Unit 15 Dynamics of Serial Killings**

Dynamics of Serial Killing

Psychopathology of Serial Killings

Role of a Forensic Psychologist in the Context of Serial Killings

**Unit 16 Public Policy and Forensic Psychology**

Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice System

Application of Forensic Psychology in Policy Making and Decision Making

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

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Dear Learner,

In the sixth semester of BAPCH you will study the elective course BPCE-142: Forensic Psychology. The main objectives of this course are to explain the key concepts of forensic psychology and its application to law, to delineate the roles and functions of forensic psychologist and to introduce the applications of forensic psychology to policing, crime and civil cases

To provide an overview of this course, the course structure is divided in to four blocks.

**Block 1:** Block 1 is titled “Forensic Psychology: An Introduction” and includes three units, 1, 2 and 3. Unit 1 is titled “Introduction to Forensic Psychology” and will cover nature and scope; relationship between psychology and law; sub-specialities in forensic psychology including investigative psychology; criminal psychology, legal psychology; and correctional psychology. The unit will also cover ethical issues in forensic psychology. Unit 2 pertains to the role and functions of a forensic psychologist and will deal with various roles played by a forensic psychologists and his/ her functions. Unit 3 focuses on assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology and will include description of the role of assessment and evaluation; assessment, in forensic psychology, assessment tests and evaluation in forensic psychology with a focus on personality tests.

**Block 2:** Block 2 is titled “Criminal Psychology” and as the name suggests the focus of this block is on understanding criminal psychology. The block consists of 3 units, units 4,5 and 6. Unit 4 deals with introduction to criminal psychology and also focuses on the role and functions of a criminal psychologist. Nature and scope of criminal psychology will also be covered in the unit, besides, the difference between forensic and criminal psychology. Unit 5 includes theories applied to criminal psychology. Unit 6 highlights the offender typologies and criminal profiling and also discusses about forensic psychology and criminal investigation, criminal profiling and psychological autopsy;

**Block 3:** Block 3 is titled “Police, Investigative and Correctional Psychology” and includes four units, Unit 7, Unit 8, Unit 9 and Unit 10. Unit 7 pertains to police psychology and includes police personality, police response to social and community problems; police stress, perception of policing in India, police & human relations and police and special population. Unit 8 is about investigative psychology and focuses on truth and deception, police interrogation and truth and techniques of Interrogation. Unit 9 relates to the eye-witness and witness protection and focuses in the meaning of eyewitness; eyewitness assessment, eyewitness evidence and child eyewitness. The last unit of this block is unit 10 and it deals with correctional psychology. This will cover the role of a forensic psychologist in prison, court/trials, interrogation, confession; role of forensic psychologist in death penalty, trials and appeals, sexual harassment and dealing with persons in conflict with law will also be covered in this unit.

**Block4:** Block 4 of this course is about the areas of application of forensic psychology and includes unit 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. Unit 11 focuses on applications of forensic psychology in civil and criminal proceedings, unit 12 on forensic psychology and child related issues, unit 13 on juvenile delinquency, unit 14 on psychopathology of homicide, unit 15 on dynamics of serial killer and unit 16 on the public policy and forensic psychology

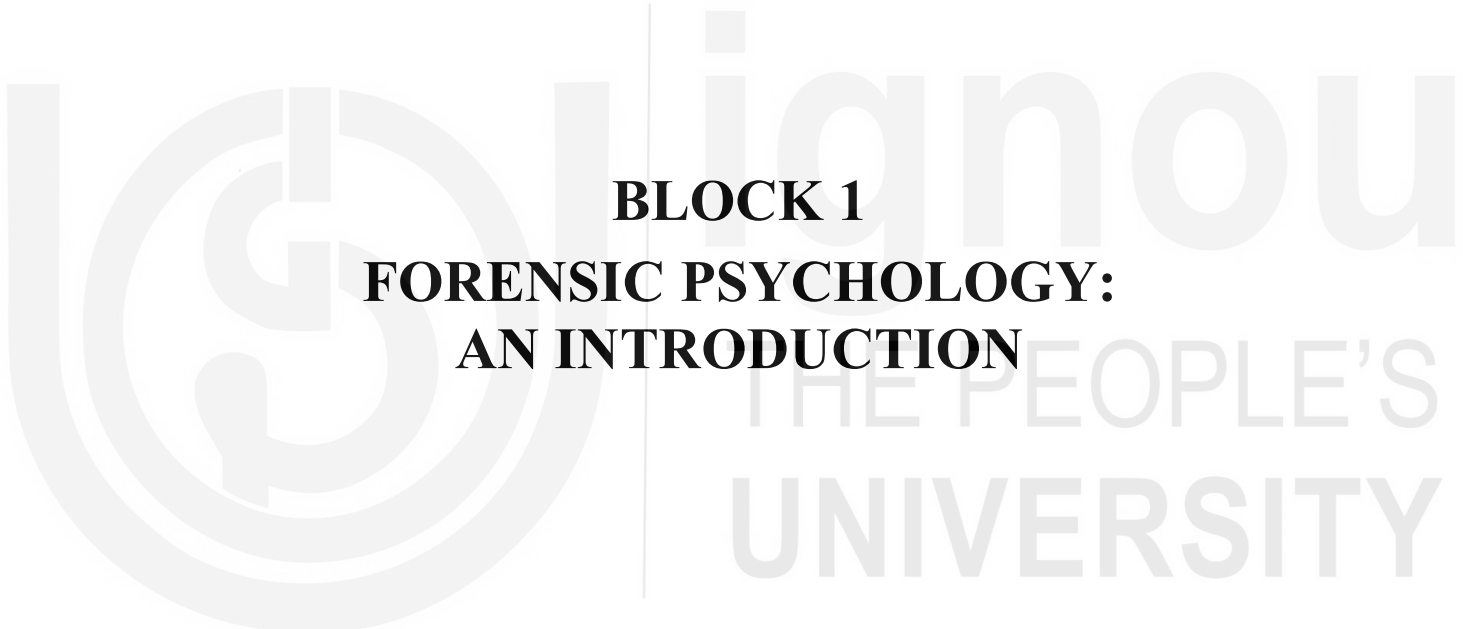
It is very important that you read all the units very carefully and try to understand the subject matter. You need to first study the psychological disorders and also understand their treatment.

Some suggestions and tips to enhance your study of this course are as follows:

- 1) Ensure that your basic concepts as given in this course, are clear. If you don't understand the terms, read again.
- 2) Answering the exercises given in Check Your Progress (given in each unit) will help you practice and learn the subject matter.



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The image features a large, light gray watermark logo on the left side, consisting of a stylized 'U' and 'G' intertwined. To the right of the logo, the text 'Uignou' is written in a large, light gray font, with 'THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY' written below it in a smaller, light gray font. A vertical line separates the logo area from the text area.

**BLOCK 1**  
**FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY:**  
**AN INTRODUCTION**



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# UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY <sup>1</sup>

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## Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Nature and Scope of Forensic Psychology
- 1.3 Sub-specialities in Forensic Psychology
- 1.4 Ethical Issues in Forensic Psychology.
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 References
- 1.7 Key Words
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.9 Unit End Questions

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- define forensic psychology;
- discuss the nature and scope of forensic psychology;
- describe the sub-specialities in forensic psychology; and
- explain the ethical issues in forensic psychology.

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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What comes to you mind when you come across the word “Forensic Psychology”? May be the word forensic brings to your mind the X files and crime related series or detective series and movies. Well, to some extent yes, in these crime related series and movies, there are often individuals involved who look at the crime or the possible criminal from a psychological perspective. Though it can be said that forensic psychology is much more scientific and deeper than what is shown in these series and movies (that are based on crime and so on).

Forensic psychology can be explained as a branch of psychology and involves systematic and scientific study of human behaviour in the context of law, crime and so on.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. S. L Vaya, Director and Additional Director, Institute of Behavioural Sciences, Gujarat Forensic Science University and Directorate of Forensic Sciences, Gandhinagar, Gujarat (Adapted from Unit 3, Block 4 of BPCE021) and Prof. Dipesh Chandra Nath, Head of Department of Applied Psychology, Calcutta University, Kolkatta (Adapted from Unit 1, Block 1 of BPCE021)

Let us try to have an idea about forensic psychology with the help of the following conversation between Anjali and her friends.

*Anjali returned home after a much busy day and was now on the way to meet her school friends, John, Nafisa, Mahima, Garima, Manjit and Lily. It was like an informal alumni meet and Anjali was looking forward to it. At the restaurant, one by one all the friends arrived and started interacting with each other. Let us look at their conversation.*

**John:** *Wow, its so nice to meet you all after so long. This was a much awaited get-together.*

**Garima:** *Well, John we could have met earlier, if you did not have a busy schedule as you do.*

**John:** *Well I work for an MNC and you know the pressure. And by the way you were also in field. so its not my fault entirely that we could not meet.*

**Garima:** *Oh yes I was posted in Bangalore. It is just that now i got my leave.*

**Lily (Smiling):** *Better late than never.*

**All in unison:** *Thats true.*

*All were busy talking, but Anjali was a bit quiet.*

**Manjit (Jokingly):** *Hey guys, be careful about what you speak we have two psychologists amongst us.*

**Mahima:** *Well, don't worry Manjit, Me and Anjali are not judging you And besides, Anjali is not just a psychologist, she is a forensic psychologist.*

**Manjit:** *Wow. Sounds pretty complex.*

**Mahima:** *Well it is a very challenging field.*

**Lily:** *So Anjali, can you tell us more about this forensic psychology and how it is different from what Mahima is doing. She is also a psychologist right?*

**Anjali:** *Well, forensic psychology is a field where psychology is applied to the legal system.*

**Mahima:** *Lily, I have done my MA in psychology and later did my Ph. D in psychology and now I am in to teaching. But Anjali after her graduation did Masters of Science in Forensic Psychology and further trained in the field.*

**John:** *Wow, that is really commendable. But what exactly do you do. Do you test DNA, collect fingerprints and other evidence? Are you like a detective?*

**Anjali(Laughing):** *No John of course not. As a forensic psychologist we have various functions, like carrying out criminal investigation, analysis of crime, profiling of offenders. We are also involved in detection of malingering or deception, interviewing eyewitness and expert witness. We also work in area of police psychology. We basically use the principles, assessment and techniques from psychology and apply them to legal system.*

**Manjit:** *Wow thats quite a lot of work. So is it more of an independent work.*

**Anjali:** *Actually no, we do work closely with police, lawyers, judges and others involved in legal system besides doctors, psychiatrists and even clinical psychologists.*

**John:** *Well, you seem to be more busy than me.*

**Mahima:** *Well, John, that depends on your perspective. All jobs are important and require you to put in effort. In case of Anjali, being a forensic psychologist does have its responsibilities as wellbeing and freedom on individuals could depend on the interpretations made by him/ her.*

**Lily:** *Really interesting. And wish you all the best dear Anjali.*

**Anjali (Smiling):** *Thanks dear friends. I do need your best wishes.*

*.....And the conversation between the friends continued.*

From the above conversation, you must have developed some idea about forensic psychology. But let us learn more about this significant branch of psychology.

In the very first unit of this course, we will try to understand the scope and nature of forensic psychology and look at its sub-specialities. Ethical issues in forensic psychology will also be discussed.

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## 1.2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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The word ‘forensic’ originated from a Latin word ‘forensis’ that meant ‘of the forum’. It mainly referred to a place where disputes were resolved, something similar to the courts in the present day (Huss, 2014). A simple way in which forensic psychology can be described is as application of principles of psychology to legal system. Many people confuse forensic psychology with forensic science. Although the two are closely related, there are many differences. The primary difference is that while forensic scientists are in the business of applying the chemical and biological sciences to law enforcement, national security, defence, or intelligence work, forensic psychologists delve into the psychological perspectives of human behaviour and apply them to the legal systems. It can also be explained as application of psychology to the criminal and civil justice systems. Criminal justice system includes three parts viz. police, court and prison.

Walker and Shapiro (2004, page 3) defined forensic psychology as the study that involves integration of psychology and law”. Thus, the two fields, that is psychology which can be described as empirical and systematic study of human behaviour is merged or integrated with law that can be described as the study of how individuals rule themselves in social settings. Polizzi and Draper (2015, page 3) stated that “forensic psychology attempts to provide expert opinion and explanation based upon established knowledge within the discipline of psychology as this relates to the topics of criminal law, family law and civil liability law”.

“Forensic psychology is the professional practice by any psychologist working within any sub-discipline of psychology (for example, clinical,

developmental, social, cognitive) when applying the scientific, technical or specialised knowledge of psychology to the law to assist in addressing legal, contractual and administrative matters” (Speciality Guidelines for Forensic Psychology, APA, 2011, page 1).

Forensic psychology is the intersection between psychology and the criminal justice system. It involves understanding criminal law in the relevant jurisdictions in order to be able to interact appropriately with judges, attorneys and the legal professionals. An important aspect of forensic psychology is the ability to testify in court, reformulating psychological findings into the legal language of the courtroom, providing information to legal personnel in a way that can be understood. Further, in order to be credible witness, the forensic psychologist must understand the philosophy, rules and standards of the judicial system.

Questions asked by the court to a forensic psychologist are generally not questions regarding psychology but are legal questions and the response must be in language the court understands. For example, a forensic psychologist is frequently appointed by the court to assess a defendant’s competency to stand trial. The court also frequently appoints a forensic psychologist to assess the state of mind of the defendant at the time of the offence. This is referred to as an evaluation of the defendant’s sanity or insanity (which relates to criminal, responsibility) at the time of the offence. These are not primarily psychological questions but rather legal ones. Thus, a forensic psychologist must be able to translate psychological information into a legal framework.

Forensic psychologists provide sentencing recommendations, treatment recommendations and any other information the judge requests. Forensic psychology also involves training and evaluating police or other law enforcement personnel. Forensic psychologists may also help with jury selection.

Forensic psychology knowledge is used in various forms, such as in treating mentally ill offenders, consulting with attorneys (for example, on picking a jury), analysing a criminal’s mind and intent, and practicing within the civil arena. A forensic psychologist may also choose to solely focus his/her career on research, ranging anywhere from examination of eyewitness testimony to learning how to improve interrogation methods. Another form of forensic psychology work is in public policy, where researchers can help in the design of correctional facilities and prisons. The role of a forensic psychologist in simple terms can be explained as assisting the legal system.

The forensic psychologist views the client or defendant from a different point of view than does a traditional clinical psychologist. Seeing the situation from the client’s point of view or “empathising” is not the forensic psychologist’s task. Traditional psychological tests and interview procedure are not sufficient when applied to the forensic situation. In forensic evaluations, it is important to assess the consistency of factual information across multiple sources.

Forensic evaluators must be able to provide the source on which any information is based. Unlike more traditional applications of clinical

psychology, informed consent is not required when the assessment is ordered by the court. Instead, the defendant simply needs to be notified regarding the purpose of the evaluation and the fact that he/ she will have no control over how the information obtained is used. While psychologists infrequently have to be concerned about the malingering or feigning illness in non-criminal clinical setting, a forensic psychologist must be able to recognise exaggerated or faked symptoms. Malingering exists on a continuum so that forensic psychologist must be skilled in recognising varying degrees of feigned symptoms.

Thus, forensic psychologists perform a wide range of tasks within the criminal justice system. By far the largest is that of preparing for and providing testimony in the court room. This task has become increasingly difficult as attorneys have become sophisticated at undermining psychological testimony. Evaluating the client, preparing for testimony, and the testimony itself require the forensic psychologist to have a firm grasp of the law and the legal situation at issue in the courtroom, using the Crime Classification Manual and other sources.

### **1.2.1 Relationship between Psychology and Law**

As mentioned by us earlier, that forensic psychology is application of principles of psychology to legal system. Thus, it is important to also focus on the relationship between psychology and law.

In the past several decades, collaboration between psychology and law has grown prodigiously. The number of journals, textbooks, and continuing education workshops available in forensic psychology has increased. In recent years, there has been a shift in the focus of clinical psychology from investigating anxiety (neurotic) and schizophrenic conditions to studying character disorders, examining externalising versus internalising styles of personality, generally, and criminal and violent behaviour specifically. As the public's interest in crime increased, clinical psychologists broadened their interests to include forensic questions and criminal behaviour.

There are three ways in which psychology and law interact:

- a) The practice of psychology in legal settings (psychology in the law).
- b) The effects of law on the practice of psychology (psychology by the law).
- c) Research and scholarly inquiry as applied to legal issues (psychology of the law)

There are epistemological differences between law and psychology. Both lawyers and psychologists need to understand these differences for their collaborations to meet with success. We can establish a functional definition of forensic psychology by describing in the above three ways how psychology and law interact: psychology in the law, psychology by the law, and psychology of the law. Let us deal with these three ways in some detail.

Some psychologists practice in a legal setting and must be aware of and knowledgeable about legal issues; expert witnesses are an example. Expert witnesses must be familiar with legal standards, definitions, and tests and the procedures by which the law operates. They must be aware of specific ethical

parameters that govern forensic psychology practice, particularly where such practice differs from traditional clinical or experimental practices .

Psychologists must be aware of the way law has increased its influence on their daily functioning, whether in clinical practice, in academia, or in research contexts. The psychologist must continue to follow refinements in the law as they affect practice and, because state law and local customs shape legal and ethical practice, to learn about the law as applicable where the psychologist practices.

The third area that is subsumed under forensic psychology concerns scholarly inquiry into what has been termed “psycholegal issues.” Psychologists have applied research methodologies to a number of legal questions and practices. Literature concerning juror selection and jury dynamics, privacy, and discretion show applications of psychology studying the law.

### **1.2.2 Forensic Psychology and Related Fields**

Forensic psychology can be related with various other fields like clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology and social psychology. In this section we will discuss about how forensic psychology can be related to these major branches in psychology.

Within the general field of psychology there are a wide range of different disciplines. Two such disciplines are clinical psychology and forensic psychology. Clinical psychology differs from forensic psychology in that the general purpose of clinical psychology is to diagnose and treat psychological dysfunction, whereas the purpose of forensic psychology is to provide the psychological assessments in legal situations. A clinical psychologist is bound by an oath of confidentiality to the patients that he/ she sees and is motivated by a desire to help those patients find accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment for any emotional or mental issue that is disrupting their lives. A forensic psychologist acts in the capacity of an expert witness in psychological matters as they relate to criminal proceedings.

#### **Forensic psychology and clinical psychology**

Forensic psychology and clinical psychology both got their start in the same general time period, the late 1800s. The first true clinical psychologist was Lightner Witmer, who was a former student of Wilhelm Wundt, the ‘Father of Psychology’. Witmer was the head of the Psychology Department at the University of Pennsylvania when he/ she began this ground breaking work with a boy that had trouble spelling. His tireless work was the first time that psychological research was applied in the therapeutic setting, and led to him/ her opening the first psychological clinic in 1896 as has already been mentioned. The first known use of the forensic psychology came when Albert von Schrenk- Notzing testified at a murder trial on the negative impact of publicity on the memories of the witness accounts. He/ she was the first to suggest, in court, that too much press surrounding an event could lead to a “retroactive memory falsification”. Essentially, his view was that the witness would have a hard time distinguishing what they actually seen from what had been reported in the press.

This very issue is still at the heart of many legal battles today. It is interesting to note that Hugo Munsterberg, who was another student of Wundt, opened a clinic in 1892 with the goal of introducing psychology to the courtroom. He/she was largely laughed at but continued championing his cause for many, many years.

In the context of how forensic psychology can be related to clinical psychology, we can also discuss about clinical-forensic psychology. Clinical forensic psychology is the subfield that most people are familiar with, even though they are not even aware of it. There are a variety of things to do with this area. Just like a clinical psychologist, clinical-forensic psychologists are mainly interested in assessing and treating people suffering from some form of mental illness. The difference is that the people being treated are also being assessed because they are somehow involved in the criminal justice system, mainly because of conviction for some offence. Most people in the subfield decide to make treatment and assessment the focus of their career in life. Offenders can be forcibly treated while in prisons, corrections facilities, as a requirement of parole/ probation, or in a hospital. Alternatively, offenders could see a clinical-forensic psychologist who operates in private practice.

**Forensic psychology and cognitive psychology:** Cognitive psychology is a discipline within psychology that investigates the internal mental processes of thought such as visual processing, memory, thinking, learning, feeling, problem solving, and language. Cognitive psychologists use psychophysical and experimental approaches to understand, diagnose and solve problems, concerning themselves with the mental processes which mediate between stimulus and response. Cognitive theory contends that solutions to problems take the form of algorithms – rules that are not necessarily understood but promise a solution, heuristics – rules that are understood but that do not always guarantee solutions. In other instances, solutions may be found through insight, a sudden awareness of relationships. Modern cognitive psychology has been deeply influenced by the work of Noam Chomsky, Albert Bandura, and Ulric Neisser.

Forensic psychology is tied closest to the cognitive perspective. The cognitive perspective was developed by George Miller, Jerome Bruner, and Ulrich Neisser throughout the 1990s. It focused on identifying the process of thinking, language, and dreams, with the main idea that perceptions and thoughts influence behaviour. Forensic psychologists not only offer their expert opinion at trials, but can also be found helping a witness identifying a murderer in a line of suspects. They sometimes hypnotise individuals to help them remember things or interview potential. They could also help jury members to eliminate those who may be biased. These tasks relate to the cognitive activities of thinking, memory and perceptions. Other times, they give their own expert testimony at trails which could result in an individual being confined to a mental institution, receive huge monetary awards, obtain custody of a child, or lose his or her life. Legal psychologists play a big role in the justice system.

Forensic psychologists often work within the judicial system in such diverse areas as determining an inmate's readiness for parole; evaluation of rehabilitation programmes; clinical competency; tort liability and damages; evidence; jury selection; and police training. The evaluations of the mental state of individuals also communicate the cognitive perspective. They may also be employed in other areas of jurisprudence, including patent and trademark disputes, divorce and custody cases, product liability, and taxation. Psychologists advise their clients in several ways, including diagnostic appraisals, which may determine the capability of the client to stand trial. They are also called to provide clinically- based opinions on a wide variety of issues arising from their diagnoses. Sometimes they obtain hospital records, police reports, witness statements, and provide relevant research. Beside submitting these and other findings, they are often required to testify in court. Forensic psychologist may be hired by a defence attorney to evaluate the defendant's mental processes. They administer personality and intelligence tests after being briefed on the circumstances of the crime and examining records detailing the mental or emotional problems and treatment. Forensic psychology can also be tied to ideas of structuralism. That is, structure of conscious experience (such as witnessing a crime); objective sensation – seeing, touching, testing, hearing and subjective feelings like memories and thoughts.

Forensic psychologists determine whether or not people are telling the truth with the use of polygraph machines (lie detector). The machine records a person's physical response to questions. The lie detector measures blood pressure, breathing, electrical conductivity of the skin, pulse and perspiration in order to tell if a person is lying or not. This aspect of forensics especially ties back to the cognitive perspective and conscious thoughts. If the enquired party does not provide accurate answers, then their body's reaction gives them away.

Forensic psychology is most directly related to the cognitive perspective because most of this profession deals with mentality, memories and conscious thoughts. Psychologists assess witnesses and suspects for accuracy in objective thoughts and help enhance memories to uncover the truth and put away the bad guys.

**Forensic psychology and developmental psychology:** Developmental psychology, also known a human development, is the scientific study of systematic psychological changes that occur in human beings over the course of their life span. Originally concerned with infants and children, the field has expanded to include adolescence, adult development, ageing and the entire life span. This field examines change across a broad range of topics including motor skills and other psycho-physiological processes; cognitive development involving areas such as problem solving, moral understanding, and conceptual understanding; language acquisition; social, personality, and emotional development; and self-concept and identity formation.

Developmental psychology includes issues such as the extent to which development occurs through the gradual accumulation of knowledge versus stage- like development, or the extent to which children are born with innate mental structures versus learning through experience. Many researchers are

interested in the interaction between personal characteristics, the individual's behaviour, and environmental factors including social context, and their impact on development; others take a more narrowly focused approach.

Developmental psychology can be related to several applied fields, including: educational psychology, child psychopathology, and forensic developmental psychology. Developmental psychology complements several other basic research fields in psychology including social psychology, cognitive psychology, ecological psychology, and comparative psychology.

Recent developments in the field of forensic developmental psychology challenge traditional conceptions about the reliability of children's reports. The areas covered involve the disclosure patterns of sexually abused children, the nature of suggestive interviews, developmental differences in suggestibility, and the amount of suggestion required to produce false reports and beliefs.

Forensic developmental psychology is a field that has emerged over the past two decades. The term was developed by Brooke and Poole (2002) and includes autobiographical memory, memory distortion, eyewitness identification, narrative construction, personality, and attachment as topics covered by this field of research.

Forensic developmental psychology is oriented toward children's actions and reactions in forensic contexts. The research is grounded in a developmental framework, and is emerging either from previous studies in basic developmental science or from related research in the adult literature. The major topics in this field of research include the conditions that precipitate false reports, the psychological status of false reports, and developmental trends in false reports.

**Forensic psychology and social psychology:** Social psychology studies the nature and causes of social behaviour. Social psychology is the study of social behaviour and mental processes, with an emphasis on how humans think about each other and how they relate to each other. Social psychologists are especially interested in how people react to social situations. They study such topics as the influence of others on an individual's behaviour (for example, conformity, persuasion), and the formation of beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes about other people. Social cognition fuses elements of social and cognitive psychology in order to understand how people process, remember, and distort social information. The study of group dynamics reveals information about the nature and potential optimisation of leadership, communication, and other phenomena that emerge at least at the micro-social level. In recent years, many social psychologists have become increasingly interested in implicit measures, mediational models, and the interaction of both person and social variables in accounting for behaviour.

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. By this definition, scientific refers to the empirical method of investigation. The terms thoughts, feelings, and behaviours include all of the psychological variables that are measurable in a human being. The statement that others may be imagined or implied suggests that we are prone to social

influence even when no other people are present, such as when watching television, or following internalised cultural norms.

Social psychologists typically explain human behaviour as a result of the interaction of mental states and immediate social situations. In Kurt Lewin's famous heuristic formula, behaviour can be viewed as a function of the person and the environment,  $B = f(P, E)$ . In general, social psychologists have a preference for laboratory based, empirical findings. Social psychology Theories tend to be specific and focused, rather than global and general.

Social psychology is an interdisciplinary domain that bridges the gap between psychology and sociology. During the years immediately following World War II, there was frequent collaboration between psychologists and sociologists. However, the two disciplines have become increasingly specialised and isolated from each other in recent years, with sociologists focusing on "macro variables" (e.g. social structure) to a much greater extent. Nevertheless, sociological approaches to social psychology remain an important counterpart to psychological research in this area.

Social psychology has a vast application in legal set up. A psychologists may play a role in advising lawyers and courts on matters of witness credibility, jury selection and how external factors can affect eyewitness memory. Periodically, social psychologists act as trial consultants or offer counsel regarding legal policy.

Social psychologists have learned that persons who confess or who provide information as a result of being subjected to abuse do not necessarily provide reliable information. The psychology of the false confessions has attracted considerable research interest in recent years, with the realisation that a surprising number of suspects confess to crimes they did not commit. Forensic Psychologists consulting with law enforcement may be able to offer interrogation strategies that will protect the rights of suspects and minimise the likelihood that a false confession will occur.

From the above discussion, you must have developed a fair idea about the nature and scope of forensic psychology. In the next sub-section, we will focus on various sub-specialities of forensic psychology.

**Check Your Progress I**

- 1) What is clinical forensic psychology?

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## 1.3 SUB-SPECIALITIES IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY<sup>2</sup>

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Let us briefly look at the sub-specialities in forensic psychology. These will be covered in detail in the rest of the units of this course.

**Police Psychology:** One of the first sub-specialities that we could discuss is police psychology. As the name suggests this has to do with police. Police psychology as a subject focuses in various aspects of enforcement of law that includes government agencies at local, state and federal levels. Police psychology also relates to the employment related aspects of police personnel. Thus, right from recruitment to selection, police personality, police stress, assessment and evaluation of psychological entities like intelligence etc. of the police personnel is covered in police psychology. Police psychologists to a greater extent are also involved in training police personnel. They may also play a role in providing counselling and therapeutic interventions to police personnel as and when required. We will discuss about police psychology in detail in unit 7 of this course.

**Investigative psychology:** Yet another sub-speciality in forensic psychology is investigative psychology and this also will be discussed in detail in unit 8 of this course. But to briefly discuss or introduce investigative psychology, it is application of principles of psychology to the process of criminal investigation. Thus, it mainly involves gathering of information from crime scene and decision making in that regard, which is then applied in order to carry out criminal behaviour analysis. Thus, an investigative psychologist can play a role in developing greater understanding about criminal behaviour and they can contribute greatly to the process of investigation. Investigative psychologists are often involved in examination of patterns and styles as reflected by the criminal so as to develop a better understanding about the psychological characteristics and thought process of the criminal.

**Criminal psychology:** This is a sub-section, that is often interchangeably used in place of forensic psychology. Though both the fields vary, criminal psychology is a sub-speciality under forensic psychology. Criminal psychology will be discussed in detail in units 4 and 5 of this course. Criminal psychology mainly focuses on the behaviour, thought process and patterns of the criminal. Criminal psychologists are thus involved in seeking answers to why the criminal behaved the way he/ she did. Criminal psychologists are often involved in offender profiling, consultations and research, assessment of mental health and other psychological entities, providing counselling and psychotherapy and they could also be involved in giving testimonies in the court.

**Legal psychology:** Another sub-speciality under forensic psychology that is closely related to forensic psychology is legal psychology. In legal psychology the concepts and principles of psychology are applied to legal

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<sup>2</sup> Section 1.3 is authored by Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar, Faculty, Discipline of Psychology, SOSS, IGNOU, Delhi

system. Legal psychologists often advise judges and individuals from legal system in making decisions. Eyewitness assessment, that will be covered in unit 9, can be categorised under legal psychology. To differentiate between forensic psychology and legal psychology, forensic psychology mainly focuses on the criminal or the offender and legal psychology focuses on the through process of the judges, legal process, legal system and so on.

**Correctional psychology:** The last sub-speciality of forensic psychology that we will discuss is correctional psychology. The focus of correctional psychology, as the name suggests, is on treatment and management of the criminals or offenders. Thus, the concepts and principles of psychology are applied for correctional purposes. Correctional psychology would include topics related to the prison and prison set up and also interventions for the inmates and offenders. Correctional psychology will be discussed in unit 10 of this course.

### **Check Your Progress II**

- 1) What is the focus of police psychology?

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## **1.4 ETHICAL ISSUES IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

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Professions use ethics codes to regulate, educate, and inspire their practitioners. When the public grants a trust to a profession, the profession assumes an obligation to practice in a way that serves the public and not merely the individual professional's appetites. Privileged communication is granted to allow the public to consult professionals without fear that their intimate disclosures will be revealed. Surgeons are allowed to cut into human flesh to serve the patient's medical needs. This trust is not granted irrevocably or unconditionally; the conditions are that the profession regulate itself by developing norms, values, standards, and practices that shape the individual practitioner. The profession does not genetically produce the next generation of practitioners, but it does produce its next generation of professionals through socialisation. Although the ultimate responsibility for ethical conduct is and must remain with the individual practitioner, the promotion of ethical conduct is the province of the profession.

Yet, codes are restrictive and conserve a profession's values. While preserving minimal skill levels to practice, they can be used to stifle creativity and foster greed.

A forensic psychologist generally practices within the confines of the courtroom, incarceration facilities, and other legal setting. It is important to

remember that the forensic psychologist is equally likely to be testifying for the prosecution as for the defence attorney. A forensic psychologist does not take a side, as do the psychologists. The ethical standards for a forensic psychologist differ for those of a clinical psychologist or other practicing psychologist because the forensic psychologist is not an advocate for the client and nothing the client says is guaranteed to be kept confidential. This makes evaluation of the client difficult, as the forensic psychologist needs and wants to obtain certain information while it is often not in the client's best interest to provide it. The client has no control over how that information is used. Despite the signing of a waiver of confidentiality, most clients do not realise the nature of the evaluative situation. Furthermore, the interview techniques differ from those typical of a clinical psychologist and require an understanding of the criminal mind and criminal and violent behaviour. For example, even indicating to a defendant being interviewed that an effort will be made to get the defendant professional help may be grounds for excluding the expert's testimony.

In addition, the forensic psychologist deals with a range of clients unlike those of the average practicing psychologist. Because the client base is by and large criminal, the forensic psychologist is immersed in an abnormal world. As such, the population evaluated by the forensic psychologist is heavily weighted with specific personality disorders. The typical grounds for malpractice suits also apply to the forensic psychologist, such as wrongful commitment, inadequate informed consent, duty and breach of duty, and standards of care issues. Some situations are more clear-cut for forensic psychologist. The duty to warn, which is mandated by many states, is generally not a problem because the client or defendant has already signed a release of information, unless the victim is not clearly identified and the issue of identifiability of the victim arises. However, in general the forensic psychologist is less likely to encounter malpractice suits than a clinical psychologist. The forensic psychologist does have some additional professional liability issues. As mentioned above, confidentiality in a forensic setting is more complicated than in a clinical setting as the client or defendant is apt to misinterpret the limits of confidentiality despite being warned and signing a release.

There are five ethical principles in the APA (2002) Principles and Code. The five ethical principles are these:

- 1) **Beneficence and maleficence:** Safeguard the welfare and rights of others and maintain vigilance in seeing the psychologist's influence is not misused.
- 2) **Responsibility:** Establish trust with clients, clarify roles and obligations, coordinate services with other professionals to the client's benefit, see to the general ethical probity of colleagues, and provide some measure of pro bono service.
- 3) **Integrity:** Promote truthfulness in research, teaching, and service, avoid dishonesty, deception, subterfuge, and misrepresenting, and where any such activities are necessary, be sure the benefits outweigh the costs and client damage is minimised or repaired.

- 4) **Justice:** Allow equal access to services by the advantaged and the disadvantaged alike, and take reasonable care that any biases and limitations to competence or expertise do not harm recipients of the services.
- 5) **Respect for people's rights and dignity:** Respect the dignity, worth, and rights of all people to privacy and autonomy, apply safeguards to protect the vulnerable or impaired, maintain awareness for cultural, individual, and role-driven differences so biases do not adversely affect the client.

When applying the principles to cases, it becomes clear that they have considerable overlap and that cases illustrating one principle frequently have applicability to others. It is only a bit less entangling to see how the ethical standards help guide the forensic psychologist.

For detailed information on the Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct given by American Psychological Association, refer to the following link <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) List the ethical principles.

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## 1.5 LET US SUM UP

To summarise, in the present unit we discussed about forensic psychology. Forensic psychology can be described as the intersection between psychology and the criminal justice system. It involves understanding criminal law in the relevant jurisdictions in order to be able to interact appropriately with judges, attorneys and the legal professionals. The nature and scope of forensic psychology was also discussed and the unit focused on the relationship between psychology and law. Forensic psychology and related fields were also discussed and in this context forensics psychology was related with clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology and social psychology. The unit further discussed about the sub-specialities in forensic psychology including police psychology, investigative psychology, criminal psychology, legal psychology and correctional psychology. Lastly, the ethical issues in forensic psychology were discussed.

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## 1.7 KEY WORDS

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**Clinical forensic psychology:** Clinical forensic psychology is the subfield that most people are familiar with, even though they are not even aware of it.

**Forensic developmental psychology:** Forensic developmental psychology is a field that has emerged over the past two decades. The term was developed by Brooke and Poole (2002) and includes autobiographical memory, memory distortion, eyewitness identification, narrative construction, personality, and attachment as topics covered by this field of research. Forensic developmental psychology is oriented toward children's actions and reactions in forensic contexts.

**Forensic psychology:** Forensic Psychology is the intersection between psychology and the criminal justice system. It involves understanding criminal law in the relevant jurisdictions in order to be able to interact appropriately with judges, attorneys and the legal professionals.

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## 1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is clinical forensic psychology?

Clinical forensic psychology is the subfield that most people are familiar with, even though they are not even aware of it.

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) What is the focus of police psychology?

Police psychology as a subject focuses on various aspects of enforcement of law that includes government agencies at local, state and federal levels. Police psychology also relates to the employment related aspects of police personnel.

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) List the ethical principles.

The ethical principles are beneficence and maleficence, responsibility, integrity, justice: and respect for people's rights and dignity.

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## 1.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Explain the nature and scope of forensic psychology
- 2) Describe the relationship between psychology and law.
- 3) Discuss forensic psychology and related fields
- 4) Describe the sub-specialities in forensic psychology.
- 5) Discuss the ethical issues in forensic psychology.



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## **UNIT 2 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Forensic Psychologist's Roles and Functions
- 2.3 Qualifications and Training
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.5 References
- 2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 2.7 Unit End Questions

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- discuss the roles and functions of a forensic psychologist; and
- discuss the qualification and training of forensic psychologist.

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The work of a forensic psychologist is varied and wide reaching. He/ she assists the police in investigation, provides advice on interviewing of suspects or witnesses, works as expert witness in court cases, works in the rehabilitation of offenders, conducts forensic psychology research or work in academia. This unit aims to present a balanced view of profession of the forensic psychologist and to introduce you to the variety of roles within which the forensic psychologist can, and does work. You will also be introduced to the specific functions that a forensic psychologist performs within these roles.

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### **2.2 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF A FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST**

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Let us look at the roles of a forensic psychologists and then we will discuss about the functions.

In 1981 Professor Lionel Haward, one of the UK's founding fathers of criminal psychology, described the four roles that psychologists may perform when they become professionally involved in criminal proceedings.

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dipesh Chandra Nath, Head, Department of Applied Psychology, Calcutta University, Kolkatta (adapted from Uni t4, Block 1 of BPCE021).

**The four roles are:**

**Clinical:** In this role the forensic psychologist will usually be involved in the assessment of an individual in order to provide a clinical judgement. The psychologist could use interviews, assessment tools or psychometric tests (i.e. special questionnaires) to aid in his or her assessment. These assessments can inform the police, the courts, or the prison and probation services about the psychological functioning of an individual and can therefore influence how the different sections of the criminal justice system process the individual in question. For example, a forensic psychologist may be asked to assess individuals in order to determine whether they are fit to stand trial or whether they have a mental illness which means that they would not understand the proceedings.

**Experimental:** This may involve the forensic psychologist performing research regarding the case. This can involve carrying out experimental tests in order to illustrate a point or provide further information to the courts (for example, how likely it is that someone can correctly identify an object in the hand of an individual from a distance of 100 metres at twilight). Alternatively it can involve psychologists providing the court with a summary of current research findings which may be relevant to the case in question.

**Actuarial:** In this context the word ‘actuarial’ relates to the use of statistics in order to inform a case. One example of how a forensic psychologist may act in an actuarial role is if they are required to present actuarial information relating to the probability of an event occurring to the court. For example, a court may wish to know how likely an offender is to reoffend before the sentence is decided. In such a case, a forensic psychologist could be called upon in order to inform the pre-sentence report to the court.

**Advisory:** In this role the forensic psychologist may provide advice to the police about how to proceed with an investigation. For example, an offender’s profile could inform the investigation, or advice could be provided about how best to interview a particular suspect. Alternatively a prosecution or defence lawyer may ask for advice on how best to cross examine a vulnerable witness or another expert witness. This role involves the use of the psychologist’s expertise in order to advice the police, courts or prison and probation services.

As you can see, psychology thus can be used in a variety of different scenarios within the criminal justice system and for a number of different reasons. The next few sub-sections will examine in more detail how psychologists can and do contribute their expertise to aid the work of the criminal justice system. This list of role, however, does not claim to be exhaustive, as there are many more ways in which psychologists play their part. We have therefore chosen the most well known roles in order to give an indication of what kinds of roles and functions forensic psychology involves.

Let us now discuss the functions of a forensic psychologist.

**Criminal investigations:** The role of a forensic psychologist in criminal investigations can take a variety of forms. Professor Laurence Alison of the

University of Liverpool has suggested a number of ways in which the expertise of a psychologist could aid the police and support the work that they do. According to him, “It is important to appreciate that the ways in which psychologists can contribute extends well beyond the process of profiling offenders. Indeed the apprehension of the offender would be assisted by enhancing police decision-making and leadership-skills, improving methods of interviewing witnesses and victims, developing accurate methods of recording, collating and analysing data on pre-convictions of offenders, developing suspect prioritisation system based on empirical research and enhancing intelligence-led policing and the use of informations.” (Alison 2005)

From the list of functions within the quote above, it may be seen that the role of the psychologist in assisting the police can be wide-ranging.

**Crime analysis:** Crime analysis (sometimes also called intelligence analysis) is one field of work which draws upon forensic psychological methods. Crime analysts are generally employed by the police (or policing agencies, for example in the UK, the National Crime and Operations Faculty and the National Crime Squad) in order to analyse crime data to aid the police carryout their roles. One of the most common roles of crime analysts is that of case linkage. This process involves the linkage of crime based on the similarities in the behaviours of the offenders as reported by the victim or as inferred from the crime scene. For example, let us examine a rape case committed by a stranger on a woman walking home alone after a night out with her friends. Crime analysts could use the details of this case – the fact that she had just left her office, that the rapist took some of her clothing away from the scene with him, the contents of the threats used towards the woman – in order to check against an already established database of similar crimes to see whether there are any similarities to past crimes. If matches are found – the same threats were used, similar items of clothing taken by a rapist, and it was in a close geographical location to another rape – then this information can be used by the police to investigate the potential that the same individual offender has committed both crimes. This allows the focusing of the resources of the investigation in order to avoid duplication of work.

**Offenders profiling or criminal investigative analysis:** Offender profiling has received a great deal of attention from the media in recent years. Media reporting of the utilisation of forensic psychologists in high profile cases has introduced the general public to the notion of offender profiling. While this has raised the profile of the field, it could be argued that the (largely) sensationalist portrayal of profiling resulted in a general confusion of what profiling actually is, how often it is done and who does it. This uncertainty amongst the general public is not altogether surprising however, as there is an absence of an agreed definition of the term ‘profiling’, even in academic circles.

What we can be clear about is that profiling uses information gleaned from the crime scene relating to the offender’s behaviour during the crime. This can be pooled with other information, such as victim statements (if available), in order to draw conclusions about the nature of the person who

committed the crime. Was the crime planned meticulously or was it impulsive? Does the offender live locally to the crime scene? What age range is the offender likely to fall into? What gender is the offender? This information can then be used to aid the police in investigations and in targeting resources.

But how exactly is a profiler able to look at the scene and use this to specify the characteristics of the offender? The answer to this question is not entirely clear mainly because different people involved in offender profiling can, and do, use a variety of techniques in order to reach their conclusions. Even those individuals who claim to be working from the same theoretical standpoint can still vary in how the theory is applied to any given case.

**Interviewing, detecting deception and eye witness research:** One of the most important tasks during investigation is collecting reliable evidence in order to put together a case of what happened during the event in question. One of the main sources of this evidence is the people who were eyewitnesses to the event. In order to gain this information, an interview needs to be conducted by the investigating police officers with the aim of gaining as much accurate information from the witness as possible. In addition, once the suspect has been identified, he/ she too is interviewed in order to gain his or her view of events and to possibly extract a confession to the crime. Hence the interview (whether with a witness or suspect) and the manner in which it is conducted can be crucial to a case.

It is not surprising, therefore, when you think of the processes (those relating to memory and the retrieval of memory) that are involved in the interview situation, the psychologists have been interested in this area for years. Given research findings such as those that state that the recall of events by witness can be manipulated by the interviewer (either intentionally or unintentionally – for example, by the type of questions asked), it is clear that those carrying out the interviews need to receive training in how to conduct the interviews appropriately.

Psychologists have been instrumental in developing guidance and advice on how best to interview witnesses and suspects and have also provided training to various police forces on these techniques. The police can also use psychologists in order to gain advice on how to interview particular types of witnesses or suspects. For example, psychologists have conducted research into interviews with vulnerable witnesses such as the young, the elderly and learning disabled witnesses. This research can be used to inform the police on how best to retrieve the information that they require from such witnesses without causing them too much stress while at the same time ensuring that the information received is as accurate as possible.

Research performed by forensic psychologists investigating the detection of deception also has useful applications for the police when interviewing witnesses and in particular suspects.

**Function of forensic psychologist as a police psychologist:** The information here, thus far, been concerned with the application of psychological knowledge to assist in police investigation. However, there is another field

within which the work of forensic psychologists, and the application of their knowledge, is useful to the police, that is police psychology. Like many organisations, the police force itself presents its own challenges – what type of person makes a good police officer? What is the best way to train police officers? How might the attendance at unpleasant scenes of crime, or repeated exposure to negative events, impact on an individual and how are those affected in this way best treated?

This area of work is not a new one – psychologists, both occupational and forensic, have been advising the police on such matters for the last twenty-five years or so. Psychologists have contributed their knowledge to the process of police officer recruitment through the introduction of psychometric tests which measure psychological characteristics that may be important in relation to such work. These could assess, for example, whether a person is an assertive individual, open to persuasion, and conscious of detail. Psychologists have also provided advice on the composition of interviews and assessment centres which will eliminate those who do not have the necessary qualities for the role as well as providing an indication of those who will prosper in such a role.

Another important area of police interest where psychologists have an ongoing input is the moderation of police stress. The stress faced by police officers is somewhat different from that in other types of employment. Whereas stress can be elevated in most jobs through organisational change, such as decreased workload or a pay rise, the police can be faced with unexpected, perhaps threatening, situations at any time during their daily work. These events, due to their unpredictable nature, cannot necessarily be mediated by organisational change. So the police also need stress management measures that can assist at an individual level, as and when they are needed. Psychologists have been instrumental in advising the police on what mechanisms would be beneficial (such as peer counselling and self-help programmes), but will also provide professional services to police officers who require more intensive stress management.

**Expert witness:** Court cases can involve complex issues including the presentation of information that is judged to be beyond the knowledge of the average layperson who may sit on a jury. In such situations, the court permits the calling of an expert witness who, by definition, has an expertise relating to the issue in question. Under the circumstances expert witnesses are permitted to provide their opinion (rather than the facts) on the issue being discussed.

The way the expert witnesses are called to the court could vary from one jurisdiction to another. For example, in some countries within Europe, an expert witness is called by the court itself in order to provide information as and when it is needed. However, in the UK and USA, the expert is instructed by either the defence or prosecution in order to provide extra strength to their version of events.

The use of the psychologist as an expert witness has, in the past, been constricted by the notion of the expert having to provide information that is beyond the knowledge of the average person. Historically then, the

admissibility of a psychologist's opinion was often limited to provide evidence relating to mental impairment or the psychological functioning of an individual. However, in recent years, the psychologists' expertise has been increasingly recognised and they are now being called upon as evidence in relation to a wide variety of issues. Some examples of these are the impact that the interviewing techniques have on a suspect or witness, the reliability of eyewitness testimony, the clinical assessment of suspect or witness, or the use of profiling techniques during an investigation.

**Forensic psychologists and assessment and treatment of offenders:**

Forensic psychologists, especially within Australia, Canada and the UK, are heavily involved in work concerning the assessment, rehabilitation and management of offenders, either in the community or when held in incarceration. This role can involve working with the offenders to reduce their likelihood for reoffending in the future or a more clinical role addressing the psychological needs of offenders. These psychological needs may (or may not) result from the effects of crime they committed (for example the development of post traumatic stress disorder or realisation of the impact of their offence on their victim) or the environment within which they are held (for example developing depression due to being away from the family or anxiety brought on by respective bullying from other prisoners). This work can be both varied and challenging in nature.

One of the first and ongoing concerns of a forensic psychologist working with offenders post-sentence is the assessment of the offenders. This encompasses an in-depth analysis of their risk of reoffending, their risk of harm (to others as well as themselves) and their needs (such as accommodation, finances and mental health, for example).

These assessments can be used in the management of the offenders' highlighted risks and needs, informing the planning of the activities that the offenders will undertake during their sentence. This could include the provision of basic skills courses, treatment programmes, one to one work on the particular issues, and so on.

In addition, if an offender is on a community sentence and has been assessed to be high risk to the public, then it may be the case that the offender becomes subject to the monitoring arrangements in order to reduce the risk that he/ she poses. The forensic psychologist can provide an input to each of these arrangements on an operational level but can also provide managerial and advisory support to those delivering such interventions.

In the recent years there has been a growth in the use of treatment programmes with the offenders. Forensic psychologists have been active in this development contributing to the design, delivery and management of programmes which attempt to address the offenders' thoughts, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to their offending behaviour, and prevent further offending.

Psychologists are also involved in the management of these programmes, ensuring that the right offenders are placed on such programmes and that the programmes are delivered in the manner in which the designer intended.

Research has shown that badly delivered programmes can be ineffective but at worst be damaging.

However, the role of the prison or probation psychologist is not limited to rehabilitation related work. Forensic psychologists within these settings can also be involved in undertaking research, overseeing training of prison or probation

**Forensic psychologists and academia / research:** With the growth of interest in forensic psychology in the recent years, there has been an increased demand for courses which teach the theory and practice of forensic psychology. With the inevitable growth in forensic psychology courses, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of forensic psychologists working within academia.

So what do those people actually do? Well, the obvious answer is that they teach students about forensic psychology: about the psychology of criminal behaviour, of the courtroom, psychology and investigation, the assessment and treatment of offenders and also about how to carry out criminal psychological research. This teaching can be at undergraduate or postgraduate level and can be delivered in a variety of different ways.

However, the role of academic forensic psychologist is not only limited to teaching. The other main role of academics is to carry out research within their field of interest. Most academics have their own research interests that develop over time and they are usually encouraged by their employers to expand their knowledge of these specialisms by researching them further. The ability to do this can often be dependent on a variety of outside forces, however, such as the availability of funding and access to privileged data or to imprisoned individuals. From a personal point of view, while at times this work can be frustrating, tedious and time consuming, it is also very interesting and hugely rewarding. Most forensic psychologists who work in universities also are required to be involved in professional practice such as giving advice in some of the many ways outlined in this Unit.

**Check Your Progress I**

- 1) List the roles played by a forensic psychologist.

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**Box 2.1 Specific examples of the functions that forensic psychologists may be asked to perform (Bartol and Bartol, 2008).**

Functions of a forensic psychologists with reference to police psychology, psychology of crime and delinquency, victimology and victim services, legal psychology, and correctional psychology are described as follows:

Let us elaborate these:

**1) Police Psychology:** Police psychology includes functions as follows:

- Assist police department in determining optimal shift schedules for their employers.
- Assist police in developing psychological profiles of serial offenders.
- Establish reliable and valid screening procedures for law enforcement officer positions at various police and sheriff departments.
- Train police officers on how to deal with mentally ill persons.
- Provide counselling services to officers after a shooting incident.

**2) Psychology of Crime and Delinquency:** This includes the following functions:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of preschool intervention strategies designed to prevent violent behaviour during adolescence.
- Conduct research on the development of psychopathy.
- Consult with legislators and governmental agencies as a research policy adviser on prevention of stalking.
- Consult with school personnel on identifying troubled youth who are potentially dangerous.
- Develop a psychological test for assessing risk among the mentally ill.

**3) Victimology and Victim Services:** Victimology and victim services include the following functions:

- Evaluate and treat persons who are the victims of crime or witness of crime.
- Conduct psychological assessments for personal injury matters having to do with such things as auto accidents, product liability, sexual harassment and discrimination, and medical negligence or workers' compensation.
- Educate and train victim service providers on psychological reactions to criminal victimisation, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- 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.

**4) Legal Psychology:** Under legal psychology the functions mentioned below are included:

- Conduct child custody evaluations, visitation risk assessments, and child abuse evaluations.

- Assist attorneys in jury selection through community surveys and other research methods.
  - Perform evaluations of a defendant's competency to stand trial.
  - Consult with attorneys and the courts concerning custody decisions, conflict resolution, and the validity of assessment procedures used in the evaluation of various psychological conditions.
  - Conduct competency evaluations for the civil court.
- 5) Correctional Psychology:** Functions under correctional psychology include
- Establish reliable and valid screening procedures for correctional officer positions at correctional facilities.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of existing programmes (a process called programme evaluation) for juvenile and adult offenders, such as victim-offender reconciliation programmes, sex offender treatment, or health education programmes.
  - Develop a stress management programme for correctional personnel.
  - Assess the development of a system for classifying prison inmates for placement within a correctional facility.

## **2.3 QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING**

The typical day of forensic psychologist can vary. In general, it is oriented towards research activities. However, a forensic psychologist may do other things as well, such as helping with jury selection. In this case, a forensic psychologist could gather information on studies done on juries especially relevant to a pending case. They would then go to a courthouse or to an attorney's office to shift through papers or conduct interviews of possible jurors. The forensic psychologist might also help attorneys narrow down the juror pool by eliminating people whose views may affect the outcome of the trial in an undesirable way. This process can sometimes last several weeks or even longer.

There are both potentially rewarding and frustrating aspects to working in forensic psychology that need to be carefully considered before pursuing a career in this field. Listed below are some potential pros and cons. There are certain very special attractions in being in the field of forensic psychology and working as forensic psychologist. For instance, if a person enjoys working with others, then this will be good profession to take up. Forensic psychologists usually work with a team of other professionals in addition to working directly with clients or criminal offenders. A person who loves challenging assignments would find forensic psychologist's job quite attractive. A person who is interested in psychology and the law subjects would find forensic psychology a very interesting subject. Forensic psychology can be very rewarding when you make a difference to someone's life and thus the forensic psychologists can derive satisfaction for helping others. There are many different specialties within the field of forensic psychology that create a number of opportunities. When working in prisons

and with juvenile delinquents every day can be challenging and very different providing opportunities for applying varying skills and techniques. While there are great attractions in the field of forensic psychology, there are equally a few unattractive or disadvantageous aspects in the field of forensic psychology. It is a field that requires expertise and thus, continuous training and regular updation of knowledge is required. Attending seminars and conferences throughout one's professional life is important for keeping with the current trends and discoveries in the field. The people that forensic psychologists work with in prison settings are sometimes very violent and the chances of getting hurt or injured is quite high when working with such violent persons. Personal safety thus need to be taken care of. Forensic psychology can be very stressful job. Often, people and situations cannot be changed easily. Thus, forensic psychologists could be prone to stress, anxiety and even burnout.

The settings that a forensic psychologists is likely to work in are mainly police stations and courts. Though many forensic psychologists also work in laboratory setups and some may be in to teaching and training. They could also work as consultants.

The educational qualification required of a forensic psychologists includes at least a Masters degree, followed by Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) or Doctor of Psychology (PsyD). One of the Institutions offering programmes in Forensic Psychology (Msc. in Forensic Psychology is National Forensic Science University, Sector 9, Gandhinagar-382007, Gujarat. You can refer to its website for more information <https://www.nfsu.ac.in/m-sc-forensic-psychology>.

Those with a desire to work in forensic psychology must be patient, adaptable, comfortable working with others, and enjoy doing research. Often, one must be a good speaker because many people who do work in this field work as expert witnesses at some point during their career. An expertise in abnormal, motivational, clinical, and social psychology is also key to being successful in this field.

Thus, besides educational qualification in psychology and forensic psychology, one needs to also update oneself with legal system in the Country. Further, a forensic psychologists will have to regular update his/ her knowledge and skills by attending training programmes and participating in conferences and seminars. A forensic psychology not only needs to have an expertise in his / her subject area but also needs to have skills pertaining to team work, communication skills, decision making and even report writing.

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## **2.4 LET US SUM UP**

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You have learned in this unit about the roles and functions of the forensic psychologists. The clinical role focuses primarily upon a scientific determination of the mental state of the offender. In their experimental role, forensic psychologists apply established experimental data to the events of a case to produce an authoritative interpretation of what transpired. The actuary role involves the forensic psychologist providing information on the

probabilities of certain events occurring or in conjunction with one another. The advisory role involves the use of the forensic psychologist's expertise in order to advise the police, courts and prison and probation services.

As you have read in this Unit, the functions of the forensic psychologist with the criminal justice system take many routes depending on the specialisation of the particular forensic psychologist. From aiding the police in their investigations advising in the selection of police officers, providing expert evidence to the court, working with offenders, conducting assessments and interventions, carrying out research or imparting their knowledge to future, the functions of a forensic psychologists are varied and challenging.

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## **2.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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### **Check Your Progress I**

1) List the roles played by a forensic psychologist.

The roles played by forensic psychologist are clinical, experimental, actuarial and advisory.

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## **2.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS**

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- 1) Explain the roles played by a forensic psychologist.
- 2) Describe the functions of a forensic psychologist.
- 3) Explain qualification and training of a forensic psychologist.

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## UNIT 3 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

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### Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Role of Assessment and Evaluation in Forensic Psychology
- 3.3 Assessment, Tests and Evaluation in Forensic Psychology
- 3.4 Personality Testing in Forensic Psychology
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 References
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.9 Unit End Questions

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- discuss the role of assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology.
- describe the assessment, tests and evaluation in forensic psychology: and
- discuss personality testing in forensic psychology.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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As such when we talk about assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology, they are not different from assessment and evaluation that generally takes place in psychology. Though, in the context of forensic psychology, the assessment and evaluation becomes relevant due to its implication as often the results and the interpretations are to be produced in court based on which certain decisions could be taken. The main use of forensic assessment is to assess the mental capacity and functioning of the individual that is often reported to the court. They are also used to assess the competency of the individuals and identify any future risks.

Forensic psychology represents the intersection between law and psychology. Psychologists are expected to render expert opinions needed for legal determinations. They also conduct psychological testing which is highly objective and accurate which are in turn used for taking fair judicial decisions and make fair judgement. The assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology is not as such different from that in other fields. In the present unit, we will discuss the role of assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology and will also look at various psychological tests that can be used.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bibha Rani, Former Director, Directorate of Forensic Science, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi (Unit adapted from Unit 3, Bloc 3 of BPCE021)

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## 3.2 ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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Forensic psychology is a branch of Psychology and, therefore, it is not possible to separate the developments in forensic psychology from the developments in the broader discipline. As a result many of the psychological assessment techniques, tests and measurements used for the assessment of offenders for forensic purposes have their origins outside the field. Their availability to forensic psychologists is contingent on developments in academic, educational and clinical psychology.

The APA Dictionary of Psychology (2007) defines psychological assessment as “the gathering and integration of data in order to make a psychological evaluation, decision, or recommendation”. Multiple tools of assessment are – interview, behavioural observations, tests, and other specialised instruments. A psychological test is a “standardised instrument (that is, a test, inventory, or scale)” used for the purpose of measuring any variety of abilities, aptitudes, or attributes.

The practice of forensic psychology relies heavily on psychological research and assessment tools. Forensic psychologists frequently use tools like Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2, Wechsler intelligence test Hare psychopathic checklist version, structured interview of reported symptom, and personality assessment inventories.

The forensic assessment differs from traditional testing in some important ways which include purpose, and understanding of who is being served. The major difference is that in mental health evaluation the client is the examinee whereas in forensic evaluation specific legal questions regarding the examinee has to be addressed in order to assist in decision making.

Forensic examinee are frequently mandated for an evaluation and often assumed to have significant reasons to be purposefully selective in self-disclosure so that a much stronger focus must be placed on examiner objectivity and assessment of examinee’s response style. Because of threats of conscious deception or selective self-presentation in forensic evaluations, there is more emphasis on use of multiple sources of data to verify information as well as strong reliance on external sources (i.e. collateral observations, historical records, and reports of others) apart from the formal assessment interactions with the examinee.

Forensic psychology assessment and evaluation is more than a mere psychometric evaluation and this evaluation and assessment includes assessment of criminal responsibility, trial competency, assessment of malingering, assessment of mental health and identifying mental disability, neuropsychological assessment and so on.

### Box 3.1 Distinction between Forensic Evaluation and Therapeutic Evaluation<sup>2</sup>

You have learned that the forensic psychologist is asked to make evaluation of defendant's mental state. Now if you study the distinction between forensic and therapeutic evaluation, your concept of forensic psychology will be better.

A forensic psychologist's interactions with the ethical responsibilities to the client differ widely from those of a psychologist dealing with a client in clinical setting.

- a) **Scope:** Rather than the broad set of issues a psychologist addresses in clinical setting, a forensic psychologist addresses a narrowly defined set of events or interactions of a non-clinical nature.
- b) **Importance of client's perspective:** A clinician places primary importance on understanding the client's unique point of view, while the forensic psychologist is interested in accuracy, and the client's view point is secondary.
- c) **Voluntariness:** Usually in clinical setting a psychologist is dealing with a voluntary client. A forensic psychologist evaluates clients by order of a judge or at behest of an attorney.
- d) **Autonomy:** Voluntary clients have more latitude and autonomy regarding the assessment objectives. Any assessment usually takes their concerns into account. The objectives of a forensic examination are confined by the applicable statutes or common law elements that pertain to the legal issue in question.
- v) **Threats to validity:** While the client and therapist are working towards a common goal, although unconscious distortion may occur, in the forensic context there is a substantially greater likelihood of intentional and conscious distortion.
- f) **Relationship and dynamics:** Therapeutic interactions work towards developing a trusting, empathic therapeutic alliance, a forensic psychologist may not ethically nurture the client or act in a "helping" role, as the forensic evaluator had divided loyalties and there are substantial limits on confidentiality he/ she can guarantee the client. A forensic evaluator must always be aware of manipulation in the adversary context of a legal setting. These concerns mandate an emotional distance that is unlike a therapeutic interaction.
- g) **Pace and setting:** Unlike therapeutic interactions which may be guided by many factors, place great time constraints on the evaluation without opportunities for reevaluation. The forensic examiner focuses on the importance of accuracy and the finality of legal dispositions.

<sup>2</sup> Box 3.1 is adapted from Unit1, Block 1 of BPCE021 and is authored by Prof. Dipesh Chandra Nath

## Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is psychological assessment?

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### 3.3 ASSESSMENT, TESTS AND EVALUATION IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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While there are some instruments specifically developed for forensic use, like structured interviews, rating scales, or tests designed for use with a particular legal application in mind like Competence Assessment Instrument for Standing Trial (CAA), Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), and Competence Assessment Instrument for Standing Trial for Defendants with Mental Retardation (CAST/MR), there are also many other instruments which are used in other settings that can be used in forensic field.

Quite frequently other instruments, developed for non-forensic purposes, are used in a forensic assessment because of the vast research on the instruments, validity indicators built into some of the instruments, or ability for these tests to contribute to a broad understanding of the person to develop hypotheses related to factors bearing on the legal question(s).

Such tests are personality tests, tests of malingering, and cognitive tests including IQ (Intelligence Quotient) measures. Whenever any test is used for forensic evaluation, important factors under consideration are:

- a) Sufficient research and norms with a population similar to that of the examinee,
- b) Adequate test development and psychometric properties, and
- c) Ability to link test results to conclusions regarding the referral question (Heilbrun, 2001).

Some of the tests and techniques of evaluation are mentioned herewith:

**Mental status examination:** A mental status examination (MSE) is an assessment of a patient's level of cognitive (knowledge-related) ability, appearance, emotional mood, and speech and thought patterns at the time of evaluation. It is one part of a full neurologic (nervous system) examination and includes the examiner's observations about the patient's attitude and cooperativeness as well as the patient's answers to specific questions. The most commonly used test of cognitive functioning per se is the so-called Folstein Mini-Mental Status Examination (MMSE), developed in 1975.

The purpose of a mental status examination is to assess the presence and extent of a person's mental impairment. The cognitive functions that are measured during the MSE include the person's sense of time, place, and

personal identity; memory; speech; general intellectual level; mathematical ability; insight or judgment; and reasoning or problem-solving ability.

Complete MSEs are most commonly given to elderly people and to other patients being evaluated for dementia. Dementia is an overall decline in a person's intellectual function—including difficulties with language, simple calculations, planning or decision-making, and motor (muscular movement) skills as well as loss of memory.

The MSE is an important part of the differential diagnosis of dementia and other psychiatric symptoms or disorders. The MSE results may suggest specific areas for further testing or specific types of required tests. A mental status examination can also be given repeatedly to monitor or document changes in a patient's condition. The main components are:

- Appearance, attitude, and behaviour.
- Mood and affect.
- Speech and language.
- Thought process and content.
- Perception
- Cognition.
- Insight and judgment.

**Interview and cognitive interview:** Interview is a face-to-face interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer. The salient features of conducting an effective interview are:

- Proper phrasing of interview questions.
- Interview schedules (set of questions, statements, pictures or other stimuli to evoke responses).
- Set of rules or procedures for using the schedules.
- Conducting the interview (evoking the responses or events that are to be classified).
- Recording the responses – paper-pencil notes, electronic equipments or other devices

The cognitive interview aims to enhance recall by subjects who are cooperative but unable to narrate the incident. It is important that the questioning in cognitive interviewing should be compatible with the cognitive abilities of the interviewee. The recall activity should include sensory motor imagery of the events. The probe needs to be of a specific nature to facilitate the flow of information and to ensure that all elements are covered specifically asking about things such as the time at which events took place. The interview here needs to mentally reinstate the incident including the interviewees feelings associated with it, and also focus on the external factors that the interviewees are able to recall. The interviewee is to be encouraged to report the events in a number of different sequences i.e. besides recollecting in chronological order also in reverse order or starting from the middle. Also they can be asked to report events from alternative

perspectives like that of another witness, the offender or from other physical location. Retrieval method can be varied and extensive in order to facilitate recall to the maximum.

**Cognitive testing:** The term “cognition” describes those mental processes that allow us to perform day-to-day functions, for example, the ability to pay attention, to remember and to solve problems are all parts of cognition.

Cognitive tests are used to measure a person’s cognition. Other terms for cognitive tests include neuropsychological tests, psychometric tests, psychological tests, intelligence tests or neurocognitive tests. Normally, tests are designed to assess a single or only a few aspects of cognition. This means that multiple tests must be administered to get an overall ‘picture’ or ‘map’ of an individual’s cognitive ability. Cognitive tests can be categorised according to the aspect or “domain” of thinking that they aim to assess. The three most commonly cited domains of cognition are attention, memory and executive function. Each of these broad domains encompasses more specific aspects of cognition. For example, at one level memory can be broken down into short-term and long-term memory, while attention can be broken down into many components including sustained and divided attention.

Each cognitive test is designed to measure performance in a limited number of domains of cognition, with additional domains assessed as different complexities which are added to the tasks. For example, attentional abilities are required to concentrate on and complete even the simplest of tasks, whilst preserved memory is additionally needed to perform well on tasks of new learning. Combining these individual tasks into a test battery can provide a more complete profile of a person’s current cognitive state. Throughout the 20th century “paper-and-pencil” cognitive tests were used commonly to measure intelligence, assist with the diagnosis of brain disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease, and measure recovery from brain disease or injury. The first computerised cognitive tests were developed in the 1970s and 1980s. Computerised testing offers accurate recording of reaction time, electronic capture and processing of data (minimising human error) and standardisation of test administration (minimising sources of response bias).

Cognitive testing is a method to ascertain the functions of the brain whether it is functioning well or otherwise. This technique has been developed in the field of Neuropsychology, which includes a vast array of tests that measure basic intelligence, learning and memory, sensory perception and sensory-muscle integration, reasoning and problem solving skills, language and communication abilities, and basic academic skills. Cognitive testing is able to identify and to document the level of skill or the degree of impaired functioning of a person. The utility of this technique in the forensic field is in cases involving head injury, toxic exposure, or questions of competency or capacity. To name some of these tests – Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), Folstein Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), and Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Test Battery.

**Psychological and behavioural profiling (criminal psychological profiling):** Criminal psychological profiling is a very effective tool in the area of crime investigation in general and specially in the cases where a

series of heinous crime (rape, murder, arson, and other violent crime) has occurred and it has not been possible to identify the perpetrator. Construction of criminal psychological profile from the scene of crime, interview of the victims and witnesses may be of immense help in narrowing down to the probable suspects in such cases.

Criminal profiling is a forensic technique which aims at providing the investigating agencies the specific information regarding the personality traits, behavioural tendencies and demographic variable of an offender based on the characteristics of the crime. The crime scene provides ample clue to the personality traits of the criminal. The criminal personality profile has to be drawn from good examination of crime scene and adequate information supplied to the forensic profiler.

**Archival information:** Many forensic psychologists also make use of archival information while carrying out assessment. Archival information includes educational records, medical records, employment related records, records related to mental health of the individual and so on. These are necessarily third party information and may also include information gathered from significant others in the individuals life, his/ her family members. The archival information and third party information is especially important in order to ensure the accuracy of the forensic assessment. This does not imply that the forensic assessment can be incorrect, rather, the an individuals freedom and wellbeing will depend on this assessment and the overall procedure of forensic assessment-and the report is subject to scrutiny and criticism from range of people including judges, lawyers, police personnel, opposing attorney and so on. Archival information and third party information is also relevant because the likelihood of secondary gain is high in forensic assessment which can also lead to increased likelihood of malingering or deception. the individuals could exaggerate or underemphasise certain symptoms during the assessment for their gains or benefit. And in such situations, archival informationa nd third part information can be helpful.

**Check Your Progress II**

- 1) What is mental status examination?

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### Box 3.2 Psychological Testing<sup>3</sup>

Psychological testing constitutes administration of psychological tests. Here, it is important to understand what are psychological tests. Psychological tests can be described as tools that can be used to measure psychological entities like intelligence, personality, attitude, interest, achievement motivation and so on. Let us look at some of the definitions of psychological tests.

Psychological test was defined by Gregory (2010, page 16) as “a standardised procedure for sampling behavior and describing it with categories or scores”. Psychological test can be described as measurement of sample of behaviour that is standardised and objective (Anastasi, 1969). Kaplan and Saccuzzo (2013) explained psychological test a device or technique used in quantification of behaviour that helps in not only understanding behaviour but also to predicting it.

Some of the main properties of psychological tests are apparent from the definitions discussed above. To highlight these properties, psychological tests are objective in nature. They also have predictive and diagnostic value. A psychological test is also standardised, meaning that the procedure followed while administering and scoring the test is uniform and the instructions and scoring are provided in the manual of the test. Besides this the manual will also provide information about the norms based on which an individual's score can be interpreted. Any psychological test measures a sample of behaviour pertaining to certain psychological entity or variable. And though there are speed tests as well, often psychological test are power tests, that is, the difficulty level of items increases gradually in their difficulty level. Thus, it is possible to identify the potential/ ability of different individuals, those having higher and those having lower potentiality/ ability. It denotes the extent of quality related to the psychological variable an individual has.

A psychological test also needs to be valid and reliable. Validity can be described as the characteristics of a psychological test that states whether the test measures what it is supposed to or purports to measure. Thus, a test on adjustment needs to measure adjustment and a test on self esteem needs to measure self esteem. A ruler, that measures length, is not a valid instrument to measure weight and a weighing machine is not a valid instrument to measure length. Similarly, a good psychological test needs to be valid and should measure the entity (or the sample of behaviour) that it was developed to measure. Reliability denotes consistency of the psychological test over a period of time. For example, when a length of a table is measured with the help a ruler on a certain day and then after six months, the length obtained will be same. Thus, the ruler can be termed as consistent instrument to measure the length. This is comparatively easy as table is a tangible entity and as such its length will not vary, unless it is broken or subjected to some other modification, in which case as well, such a modification or change will be easily visible. However, in case of psychological entities that are intangible, establishing reliability or consistency is a difficult task. Therefore, if a psychological test on adjustment is developed and it is administered on a group of adolescents, the scores obtained at a certain point and some time later, say after six months need to be more or less same or similar.

<sup>3</sup> Box 3.2 is taken from Unit 6 of BPCC134 and is authored by Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar.

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### 3.4 PERSONALITY TESTING IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

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Central to the psychological perspective is the idea that almost all causes of criminal behaviour originate in the personality. Personality is defined as the complex set of emotional and behavioural attributes that tend to remain relatively constant as the individual moves from situation to situation. Psychiatry goes a step further by postulating that mental illness and crime both have similar properties (in being responses to the same stressors and each having maladaptive qualities).

As long ago as 1870, Henry Maudsly, in his book, *Body and Mind*, wrote that criminals would go insane if they didn't engage in crime. This is because their pathological urges must find expression in something. So, it has long been recognised that there is a strong relationship between mental illness and crime (not to say that one is the cause of another). Criminal adaptation to this condition of helplessness occurs because choosing crime over other possible alternatives provides certain psychological advantages or gratifications, which are as follows:

- Crime offers the possibility of excitement.
- Crime calls for the individual to maximise his faculties and talents which might otherwise lie dormant.
- Crime can relieve feelings of inner oppression and stress.
- Adopting the criminal role provides an excellent rationalisation for inadequacy.
- Deviant behaviour sometimes helps the criminal to form close and relatively nonoppressive relations with other criminals.
- Crime can provide pleasure or gratify needs.

One of the major purposes of personality test is to assess the match between a person's personality profile and the required job profile, and thus screen out candidates. It is very likely that as part of job selection process a candidate will have to face a personality test. While the job interview examines the person's overt behaviour, the personality test 'aims' to reach deeper, and expose those areas that the person may not be aware of, thereby providing recruiters with a more comprehensive profile of the candidate's personality.

The information provided by the personality test, coupled with the interview and the other psychometric tests including aptitude tests, helps the evaluator to put the pieces together and get an overall impression of the applicant.

Thus, personality testing irrespective of it being used in forensic field or employment field or any other field, is used to gather information to allow psychologists to describe what a person is like, how the person functions or is likely to function with others, whether there is significant psychopathology, extent to which a person is open and transparent in self presentation or guarded or even deceptive and prognosis for improvement with treatment for mental health problems.

In forensic field the personality testing is utilised to address questions like risk assessment, mental illness diagnosis and treatment recommendations, competency and capacity, tort cases where emotional distress claims are made, and criminal cases where mental illness factors are being presented. Some of the personality tests are described as follows:

**The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI):** It is known as the MMPI, and its revised second edition (MMPI-2) are psychological assessment instruments completed by the person being evaluated, and scored and interpreted by the examiner. The clinician evaluates the test taker's personal characteristics. By analysing the test taker's patterns of response to the test items, the examiner is able to draw some tentative conclusions about the client's level of adaptation, behavioural characteristics, and personality traits. The MMPI-2 is preferred to the older MMPI because of its larger and more representative community comparison group (also referred to as the "normative" group).

The results of the MMPI-2 allow the test administrator to make inferences about the client's typical behaviours and way of thinking. The test outcomes help the examiner to determine the test taker's severity of impairment, outlook on life, approaches to problem solving, typical mood states, likely diagnoses, and potential problems in treatment. The MMPI-2 is used in a wide range of settings for a variety of procedures. In addition, the instrument is often used by expert witnesses in forensic settings as part of an evaluation of a defendant's mental health, particularly in criminal cases. The MMPI has also been used to evaluate candidates for employment in some fields, and in educational counselling.

**Personality Assessment Inventory:** The Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) provides information relevant for clinical diagnosis, treatment planning and screening for psychopathology. The PAI covers constructs most relevant to a broad-based assessment of mental disorders.

This is a 344-item instrument requires 50-60 minutes to administer. Each item is rated on a 4 point scale ranging from false, not at all true, to very true. The PAI consists of 22 non-overlapping full scales covering the constructs most relevant to a broad-based assessment of mental disorders: 4 validity scales, 11 clinical scales, 5 treatment scales, and 2 interpersonal scales. To facilitate interpretation and cover the full range of complex clinical constructs, 10 full scales contain conceptually derived sub-scales.

**Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO PI-R):** The NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) is a highly-regarded assessment of personality. Based on the Five-Factor model, the NEO PI-R measures the interpersonal, motivational, emotional, and attitudinal styles of adults and adolescents. It consists of 240 personality items and 3 validity items, and is available in two forms. Form-S is designed for self-reports and Form-R is written in the third person for observer reports.

It is used in the following areas:

- In counseling and clinical settings with adults as well as senior high school and college students.
- In business and industrial settings.
- Psychological research, including studies in sport psychology and recreation.

The NEO PI-R was designed to provide a general description of normal personality relevant to clinical, counselling and educational situations. NEO PI-R items and materials were designed to be easily read and understood. The five domains (factors) measured by the NEO PI-R provide a general description of personality, while the facet scales allow more detailed analysis. These five factors and their facet scales include:

- a) Neuroticism (Anxiety, Hostility, Depression, Self-Consciousness, Impulsiveness, Vulnerability)
- b) Extraversion (Warmth, Gregariousness, Assertiveness, Activity, Excitement- Seeking, Positive Emotions)
- c) Openness to Experience (Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas, Values)
- d) Agreeableness (Trust, Modesty, Compliance, Altruism, Straight forwardness, Tender-Mindedness)
- e) Conscientiousness (Competence, Self-Discipline, Achievement-Striving, Dutifulness, Order, Deliberation)

**Projective Tests:** In psychology, a projective test is a type of personality test in which the individual offers responses to ambiguous scenes, words or images. This type of test emerged from the psychoanalytic school of thought, which suggested that people have unconscious thoughts or urges. These projective tests were intended to uncover such unconscious desires that are hidden from conscious awareness.

In many projective tests, the participant is shown an ambiguous image and then asked to give the first response that comes to mind. The key to projective tests is the ambiguity of the stimuli. According to the theory behind such tests, clearly defined questions result in answers that are carefully crafted by the conscious mind. By providing the participant with a question or stimulus that is not clear, the underlying and unconscious motivations or attitudes are revealed. These tests are used in forensic setting in order to find out the underlying psychodynamics of a criminal behaviour.

**Check Your Progress III**

- 1) List any two personality tests.

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### 3.5 LET US SUM UP

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To summarise, in the present unit, we discussed about assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology. The forensic assessment differs from traditional testing in some important ways which include purpose, and understanding of who is being served. The major difference is that in mental health evaluation the client is the examinee whereas in forensic evaluation specific legal questions regarding the examinee has to be addressed in order to assist in decision making. Forensic psychology assessment and evaluation is more than a mere psychometric evaluation and this evaluation and assessment includes assessment of criminal responsibility, trial competency, assessment of malingering, assessment of mental health and identifying mental disability, neuropsychological assessment and so on. The unit discussed about tests and techniques used in assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology including mental status examination, interview and cognitive interview, cognitive testing, psychological and behavioural profiling and archival information. Personality testing in forensic psychology was also discussed.

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### 3.7 KEY WORDS

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**Archival information:** Archival information includes educational records, medical records, employment related records, records related to mental health of the individual and so on. These are necessarily third party information and

may also include information gathered from significant others in the individuals life, his/ her family members.

**Mental status examination:** A mental status examination (MSE) is an assessment of a patient's level of cognitive (knowledge-related) ability, appearance, emotional mood, and speech and thought patterns at the time of evaluation.

**Psychological assessment:** The APA Dictionary of Psychology (2007) defines psychological assessment as "the gathering and integration of data in order to make a psychological evaluation, decision, or recommendation".

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## 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is psychological assessment?

The APA Dictionary of Psychology (2007) defines psychological assessment as "the gathering and integration of data in order to make a psychological evaluation, decision, or recommendation". Multiple tools of assessment are – interview, behavioural observations, tests, and other specialised instruments.

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) What is mental status examination?

A mental status examination (MSE) is an assessment of a patient's level of cognitive (knowledge-related) ability, appearance, emotional mood, and speech and thought patterns at the time of evaluation.

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) List any two personality tests.

Two personality tests are:

- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI and MMPI-2),
- NEO-Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO-PI-R) and

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## 3.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Describe the role of assessment and evaluation in forensic psychology.
- 2) Differentiate between forensic evaluation and therapeutic evaluation.
- 3) Discuss the various tests and techniques of forensic assessment.
- 4) Describe personality testing in forensic psychology.