



# Crime Scene

Spring 2018

Psychology Behind Bars & in Front of  
the Bench



The Official Organ of the  
Criminal Justice Section of the  
Canadian Psychological  
Association

# WHAT'S INSIDE

Word from the Chair – By Jim Cheston	3
Special Announcement	4
Save the date! N4 is May 31-June 2, 2019 in Halifax, NS – By Joseph Camilleri	5
The Use of Courthouse Facility Dog Program in Supporting Child Witnesses during Criminal Proceedings – By Melissa Glazer, Rachel Braden, Daniel Ashbourne, & Alan Leschied	6
Risk, Residence, and Re-integration in Forensic Mental Health: A Cautionary Note – By Smita Tyagi	11
AP-LS 2018: Lobby ducks, plea bargaining & beyond – By Alisha Salerno	15
2018 Forensic Psychology Day @ X – By Claire Keenan & Jennifer Aftanas	17
Working with Sexualizing At-Risk Youth: Challenges and Learning Outcomes – By Jessica Sciaraffa	20
Book Review: Motivational Interviewing with Offenders – By Pamela Yates	23
Recent Publications	24
Careers	26
Upcoming Conferences	27

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# Word from the Chair

By  
Jim Cheston, Ph.D., C.Psych.



I am very pleased to be able to report that very encouraging progress has been made in the efforts of your Executive Committee to have psychologists legislatively designated to perform assessments to determine Fitness to Stand Trial, as well as being Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Illness. In the last issue of Crime Scene I reported that the Fitness Paper, which had been created by a working committee of Section members, had been submitted to CPA and was under review. The paper has since received final approval from the CPA Board of Directors, and has been used by CPA, notably by its Executive Director, Dr. Karen Cohen, to advocate for federal legislative change to have psychologists designated to perform these assessments. Karen has met with Members of Parliament with relevant portfolios and she has reported that representatives from all parties consulted have been very receptive to the idea. Many thanks to CPA and specifically to Dr. Cohen, for these efforts.

The CPA convention, which is being held this year in Montreal in conjunction with the International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP), is fast approaching. I have been told that our annual general meeting will be scheduled on Thursday June 28. We will be having a reception immediately following the meeting again this year and I hope to see many

## ICAP 2018

Section Annual Meeting will be held from 4–5:00pm on Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in room 516D (level 5) of the Palais des congrès de Montréal.

Our Section reception will be held from 5–6:00pm on Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in room 519B.

<http://www.icap2018.com/>

# SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

of you there. I expect the reception to rival the one that followed our AGM last year in Toronto, which is good reason to attend, in addition to the excitement of the meeting itself. This year, due to the retirement of Dr. Karl Hanson, we will be electing a new Secretary/Treasurer. Karl has been a pivotal member of the CJPS Executive for many years and his considerable efforts in supporting the Section are very much appreciated. Also remember that the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal runs from June 28 to July 7, so this is a great opportunity to combine a terrific music experience with the CJPS AGM, the CPA Convention and the International Congress of Applied Psychology.

Speaking of the CPA Annual Convention, 2019 will see it again run in conjunction with the North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference (NACCJPC) May 31 to June 2. Since this one, which will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, will be the fourth NACCJPC, we are referring to it affectionately as N4. The Steering Committee has already confirmed some terrific international invited speakers, who you will soon be hearing more about from the N4 Marketing Committee. As appealing as this year's CPA convention and ICAP in Montreal are, it is hard not to be eagerly looking forward to N4 next year in Halifax. Those who have been to one or more NACCJP Conferences know that these are not to be missed.

So I look forward to seeing many of you this June at CPA/ICAP in Montreal and next year at N4/CPA in Halifax. Both will be very notable events for members of the Criminal Justice Psychology Section of CPA.

We are delighted to announce that the Criminal Justice Taskforce members who developed a position paper on the assessment of fitness to stand trial and criminal responsibility have been selected to receive the **2018 CPA John C. Service Member of the Year Award**.

Excerpt from the award letter:

*"It is because of the rigour, clarity and cogency of the position you developed, that the CPA can present the position with confidence to government. Your task force, and indeed the Section on Criminal Justice, is the best embodiment of how members of the CPA can mobilize, engage and lend their expertise to advance the discipline and profession."*

**Our warmest congratulations to our Taskforce members: Drs. Barry Cooper, Laura Guy, Andrew Haag, David Hill, David Kolton, Milan Pomichalek, Ronald Roesch, Margo Watt, and Joanna Hessen-Kayfitz.**

The Criminal Justice Taskforce members will be presented the award at the CPA Awards Ceremony to be held at the CPA Presidential Reception at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal, QC on Tuesday, June 26, 2018. Further details will be provided at the end of May. We encourage all CJPS members to attend and support our colleagues on this tremendous achievement!

The position paper can be accessed at the following link:  
<https://bit.ly/2HXGS1b>

# Save the Date! N4 is May 31 - June 2, 2019, in Halifax, NS

By Joseph Camilleri, Ph.D.

Planning for next year's 4<sup>th</sup> North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference is in full swing! We have already confirmed three keynote speakers: Dr. David Farrington for his career contributions, Dr. Karin Beijersbergen, an emerging scholar on procedural justice, and Dr. Lynn Stewart, an expert on women offenders. We are working on confirming two more, and so it is already looking like an impressive lineup.

We would also like to welcome new and returning members of the N4 Marketing Committee. This year's committee includes Melissa Miele (Chair), Stephen Wong, Katie Seidler, Yolanda Perkins, Steve Norton, Sara Wotschell, McKenzie Holton, and Shelia Brandt. If you are interested in helping out with the marketing committee, please contact Melissa Miele at [mmiele23@gmail.com](mailto:mmiele23@gmail.com).

Stay connected to conference updates on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#), and please share these links with colleagues to help us spread the word.

Sincerely,

Joe Camilleri  
N4 Steering Committee Chair





# The Use of a Courthouse Facility Dog Program in Supporting Child Witnesses during Criminal Proceedings

**By**  
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In Canada in the mid 1980s increasing attention was being paid to developing a means to support child victims of crime required to testify during the court process against their alleged perpetrator. Bala (1999) noted that, prior to this time, child witnesses were viewed as inherently unreliable with no accommodations made to support their ability to provide testimony. However, as Bala cites, legislation from 1988 (S.C. 1987 c. 24) permitted children to testify without being sworn if they had the "ability to communicate" or "promising to tell the truth."

Coincidental with this increasing realization of the importance of a child's testimony was recognition that stress on a child in telling their story within the court and withstanding cross-examination was untenable. Hence, changes in Canada's evidentiary procedures attempted to minimize the psychological impact on child witness without influencing their credibility. This included the use of placing a screen between the child and the alleged perpetrator, videotaping testimony, or having a child testify in an adjoining room (Holder, 2012). Despite these attempts, child and youth witnesses continued to suffer secondary trauma to their initial victimization (Quas, Goodman et al., 2005).

The use of a courthouse facility dog is the most recent initiative in attempting to lessen the trauma and allow the child or youth to feel safe in describing the details to the court regarding their victimization.

## Utilizing the Courthouse Facility Dog Program in Support of Child Witnesses

Courthouse facility dogs [CFDs] are uniquely trained service dogs that accompany individuals who are taking part in court proceedings. They are a source of comfort for vulnerable witnesses before, during, and after their trial (McDonald & Rooney, 2016). Courthouse facility dogs have only recently been implemented, and their presence reflects more productive court hearings, and more productive and accurate face-to-face testimonies, while also reducing secondary trauma for the witnesses (Dellinger, 2009).

*Preparation of the service dog.* CFDs come from an accredited service dog agency through Assistance Dogs International (ADI). Standards call for a CFD to respond to commands at least 90% of the time on the first request in public places and in home environments. They must display obedience by responding to voice and/or hand gestures for commands such as sitting, staying in place, and lying down. They must walk near the handler in a controlled fashion while responding to commands (Assistance Dogs International, 2018).

*What is the Function of a CFD? CFDs are* viewed as being “most effective if the witness has had an opportunity to bond and interact with the dog during pre-trial interviews” (Sandoval, 2010, p. 21). The role of a CFD is to invoke support and comfort during a potentially psychologically distressing event (Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2018). The dog must be emotionally available to the witness, whether that is reflected in the dog placing their head on the individual's lap or being touched, often for a prolonged period of time. The witness may “hold the dog's leash while testifying or use the dog as an opportunity to look or speak to the dog instead of to the examiner, who may be extremely intimidating” (Sandoval, 2010, p. 17). The dog's calming presence is meant to help ground the witness during the court hearing.

However, the use of CFDs is not without controversy, as their presence may be viewed



as compromising the integrity of the court process. The purpose of the current study was to understand the role of a CFD in the context of the perceptions of court officials regarding the program.

*What About the Defense's Rights?* The defendant's right to a fair trial and the potential violation of their Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a significant concern when using a CFD or any alternative method for child or youth witnesses in court. It may be construed that any attempt to mitigate the trauma for the child creates prejudice against the defendant by highlighting the vulnerabilities of the child. Defendants and defense lawyers have registered their concern that a jury or judge may form a bias against the defendant, as these alternative approaches display a sense of weakness, innocence and construct themes around victimization in the accused (Dellinger, 2009).

The presence of a CFD may create prejudicial influence (Dellinger, 2009). Conversely, when dogs are "kept out of the jury's sight, they probably have less impact than if a young witness is clutching a stuffed animal or has a person nearby for support" (Johansson, 2012, para. 23). In decreasing bias towards the perpetrator, the CFD should not be a visual distraction or reminder for the jury or judge of the nature of the child's vulnerability. Judges also have the duty to instruct jurors not to exhibit bias when a CFD is providing support to the witness. Research has shown that “allowing

a dog to assist a testifying child is less prejudicial and has a lesser effect on a jury than an adult accompanying the child to the stand” (Dellinger, 2009, p. 186).

### **The Current Study**

The current study examined, within one specific jurisdiction, court officials’ views and attitudes regarding the use of CFDs. It was also the focus of the present study to gain an appreciation from court personnel regarding the relative value of CFDs in comparison to other child witness assistive approaches.

*Participants.* Seven participants were involved in the study. These participants reflected a range of disciplines involved in the court process including crown attorneys (3), defense counsels (3), and an employee from the Child Witness Project (1).

*Measures.* The qualitative component of this study consisted of a structured interview that elicited the perceptions and attitudes in the use of a CFD. Thematic analysis was used to examine the narrative content in the interviews (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano & Morales, 2007). The quantitative component included participant’s rank ordering the use of a facility dog in comparison with other child witness supports through completion of a questionnaire.

*Procedure* Participants completed a consent form and a 30 minute structured interview. Following the formal interview, a short self-report questionnaire was completed.

### **Results**

*Thematic Analysis.* Seven overall themes were identified that focused on the overall challenge of working with children and youth within the court process. Additional themes reflected both the ways in which youth react to stressful court related situations, while still understanding the court official’s perception of the CFD. The common factor in each participant’s report revealed they identified positive aspects of using the CFD program. Nevertheless, defense counsels were more forthcoming regarding their

concerns in the potential compromise and bias in the use of the CFD.

*Rank Order Measure Results.* The first question asked court officials to rank on a six point Likert scale how important various testimonial aids were. These aids included the use of the screen, video recordings, adjoining rooms, comfort objects, courthouse facility dog, and support persons. Placing a child in an adjoining room was ranked as being most effective, followed by the use of the CFD. In descending order, use of the screen, videotaped testimony, and lastly the use of a comfort object were ranked as being least effective in the process.

The second question on the rank order measure asked court officials how concerned they were with the use of testimonial aids during the trial. Use of the screen was ranked as having the most prejudicial impact on the trial process followed by videotaped evidence, use of an adjoining room, and the presence of a comfort object. More than half of the participants viewed the use of a CFD as among the least prejudicial.

### **Discussion**

Use of the CFD program is a recent innovation to the criminal justice process involving child and youth witnesses. The current study was a preliminary exploration of the potential impact of CFDs on the court process, specifically as it relates to its use in potentially biasing the process. Reports from court personnel suggested that while there is the potential for bias, it was not as prominent as what was first thought at the beginning of the study by the investigators. However, it was the perception of the defense counsels who registered the most reservations relative to the crown attorneys and child witness worker, where the potential for bias was rated higher than the use of other testimonial aids. Defense counsel also identified the potential for distraction within the court process due to the dog’s presence. Certain participants also reported that younger children would find the dog’s presence more distracting. This aligns with Quas and Goodman’s (2012) understanding regarding how different age



groups react differentially to the court process and may lead to the conclusion that older children may benefit more from the use of a CFD.

*The Concern for Bias.* Although the potential for bias in the use of the program was identified, the thematic analysis also revealed that the benefits of the CFD reflected in a child/youth increased sense of safety, support during sentencing, companionship, a reduction in physiological symptoms related to anxiety and stress were of greater importance. These effects in the use of the CFD appeared to far outweigh the concerns for bias. Thus, the majority of the subthemes reflected the potential of the CFD to provide emotional support to child and youth witness. This conclusion coincides with the work of Dietz, Davis and Pennings (2012), who reported that the use of animal-assisted therapy, specifically for children who had experienced sexual assault such as with the majority of the children who are supported through the children witness program, can significantly contribute to helping increase feelings of safety, trust, and acceptance.

*Clinical Relevance.* Lawyers who work with children and youth witnesses use certain strategies both in court preparation as well as throughout the trial process in addressing the stress placed on child and youth witnesses. In the current study, court officials expressed their awareness of the emotional challenges that child and youth witnesses experience. Some participants noted their awareness of the potential for secondary trauma that many children and youth experience in preparation for their court hearing. This awareness speaks to the degree to which some young witnesses are already traumatized before they even get to court. Such concerns add credence to the use of the CFD in helping to create a safe space in which to allow the child or youth to both prepare for and present their evidence to the judge or jury.

All court officials noted that the use of live

testimony is the most accurate way to attain candid results. It is why the use of adjoining rooms or videotaped testimony is universally viewed as the least preferred option. While again, use of the CFD is at an early stage, Dellinger (2009) has noted that the use of CFDs “may prove to be the previously missing link that would enable some children and other emotionally frail witnesses to be present and testify in open court while protecting them from the emotional trauma the law seeks to avoid” (Dellinger, 2009, p. 178).

### **Summary**

This study is among the first to address how the use of a CFD as a testimonial aid may be beneficial in helping child and youth witnesses who are experiencing emotional difficulties while testifying in court. The focus was on the perceptions of court related personnel who interact with the CFD program. Through the use of structured interviews and completion of questionnaires, it would appear that a CFD program is viewed as a potential benefit for youth victims and witnesses without biasing the court process. However, it must be reiterated that certain themes, mostly emanating from defense counsel, highlighted areas of potential biasing of the process and speaks to the need to monitor the ways in which the use of CFDs can reduce the potential bias while still implementing the program. This could include keeping the dog out of the judge or jury’s sight or providing additional instructions to address prejudicial concerns of the accused to jury members (Dellinger, 2009). Again however, while promising, the use of CFDs is in its infancy and additional research is needed to monitor its effectiveness in order to track the potential for its role in the court process.

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# Risk, Residence, and Re-integration in Forensic Mental Health: A Cautionary Note

By  
**Smita Vir Tyagi, Ph.D., C.Psych.**

The crisis of affordable housing in Canada is a serious barrier to re-integration for mentally ill individuals in the forensic mental health (FMH) system. Typically, they need supportive housing with trained staff, higher client-staff ratios, and programs or services on-site. However, in every jurisdiction, needs vastly outstrip the available supply. In the open market, clients face choices of poor quality housing located in neighbourhoods with high exposure to destabilizers like drug use, criminal activity, lack of safety, lack of facilities, lack of supports etc. Not surprisingly, clients often decompensate psychiatrically, relapse into drug use, or get into trouble with the law, returning to the hospital via the 'revolving door'. There is little question that stable and safe housing is a foundation without which other rehabilitative efforts can come to naught. However, access to supportive housing is contingent upon a number of processes, some of which can have unintended consequences. One of these is discussed below.

Housing sector teams work closely with FMH clients and hospital teams in preparing for discharge from the institution. Recently there has been an increase in requests for forensic risk assessments as part of the housing placement process and interestingly, requests

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for client's scores on specific actuarial risk measures. In one instance, a team was heard lamenting a missing VRAG score in a client's file as it was seen to be critical to their discharge planning. In another, a housing team in the community was heard decrying the fact that they do not routinely get CPICs, which they were used to reviewing as part of their intake. In a third instance, a housing team asked for a client's STATIC-99R score as it would help with their housing placement discussion. The housing sector seems to have eagerly embraced risk measures and assessments although it is unclear if their intent and purpose are clearly understood. At a prima facie level these requests seem legitimate. Who can argue that a thorough assessment of risk is not important in appropriate housing placement for a forensic client? However, it is worth a pause. A long one.

In the larger discourse on violence, society and its institutions (schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, public spaces, etc.) have moved to zero-tolerance approaches towards violence or acting out behaviour of any kind. Additionally, the threshold for what constitutes violence or aggression seems to have become significantly lower. This discourse seems to have permeated every aspect of the helping professions including supportive housing. A case in point: a client in a shared residence throws a butter knife at a fellow resident and after 'three strikes' — throwing small objects, once at a wall and once at a staff desk — is black listed from accessing any housing through the sector. How we define aggression, our tolerance for it, as well as our capacity to manage it seems compromised by this larger discourse. Practical issues such as

paucity of resources (staffing, space, staff training) have also played a significant role in the weakening of our ability to manage FMH clients who can present with many challenges including aggression. Is it any wonder that housing agencies are increasingly professing a need for certainty about client's risk of violence, a certainty seen to be assuaged by a risk assessment. Almost everyone seems to want the Low risk client who is "easy to place" and does not pose a "management problem" (quotes from sources), whereas placement for those whose risk is not low is becoming more difficult.

The rise and popularity of risk assessments is not separate from the all pervasive influence of actuarialism<sup>i</sup> in society at large. It is ubiquitous in many spheres, such as health, car insurance, or air travel to name a few, where risk estimation is used every day in decision-making. Over time, notions of risk, protection from risk, tolerance of risk, and what is considered 'risky' have made their way into the lexicon of forensic practice. Their apparent objectivity notwithstanding, we would be hard pressed to argue that morality is not embedded in the risk technologies and systems of risk management within actuarialism<sup>ii</sup>. It is a paradox of risk assessment that measures, which are based on aggregate data are being applied in real life in ways that are in fact highly individualized<sup>iii</sup>. The decision-making process is very much related to cultural attitudes regarding tolerance of hazards<sup>iv</sup>. In FMH, especially in relation to housing, it reflects a distinct risk aversion, a low tolerance for the hazard of aggression or any inappropriate behaviour for that matter by mentally ill individuals. This is a point for pause because it is in fact not uncommon to see people who are mentally ill act out in all manner of ways, especially when they are unwell. However, it is a 'risk' that many housing agencies are loath to take, lest they become responsible for any fallout from same. The issue seems less of an individual's propensity for aggression (i.e., low or high risk) and more of what institutions are prepared to tolerate from mentally ill clients-hence the desirability of those seen as low risk.

We need to exercise great caution and provide more education on the risks and benefits of risk assessments, in particular the penchant for relying on actuarial measures. These measures were developed for prediction rather than case management purposes. They can heavily disadvantage individuals assessed as high risk (who may actually end up looking as low risk if their mitigation efforts are properly accounted for). A number of measures, both actuarial and clinical, run the risk of false positives and have robust but moderate predictive value. It is also worth noting that in the science of risk prediction, there is theoretical slippage between concepts of risks and needs<sup>v</sup>. For example housing, a dimension of stability, is a need but is also a risk. FMH clients have many needs, which present barriers at the time of community re-entry, such as lack of housing, unemployment, lack of stable supports, etc. These then become the very things that are problematized as risk. On a separate note, it is ironic that individuals assessed as high risk become lower risk if protective factors (of which housing is one) are put in place. Developers routinely caution users on ethical and appropriate use of these measures. However, cautions and caveats notwithstanding, these assessments are seen as solid and unassailable and requests for them continue to increase.

The use of risk assessments in the context of housing also highlights an important underlying assumption, the issue of deserving-ness. Are high risk individuals deserving of housing in the same way as low risk individuals? Should a moderate or high PCL or VRAG score preclude an individual's need for shelter? Should it mean release for the low risk mentally ill client and indefinite hospital detention for the high risk mentally ill client? Who is more or less desirable in terms of State support for housing? How is risk being understood? How should risk assessments be used? These are moral and ethical questions that bear examination. If we do not, we may be in peril of becoming not just risk averse but responsibility averse<sup>vi</sup> and potentially

fail those who are in our care.

Safe and secure housing is a universal need, a universal right. A right protected by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Canada is a signatory to several international human rights treaties that protect the right to adequate housing. It is an important social determinant of health and key to successful re-integration into community. Research in the United States has shown the devastating effect of residence restrictions on sex offenders, which has done little, if anything, to prevent sex offender recidivism<sup>vii</sup>. Indeed, by increasing housing instability and homelessness, these restrictions have inadvertently increased the risk of recidivism<sup>viii</sup>. On the other hand, studies have shown that housing programs, like Housing First, achieve the best outcomes for individuals<sup>ix</sup>, especially when they show fidelity to principles such as immediate access to housing with no housing readiness requirements, consumer choice and self-determination, recovery orientation (including harm reduction), individualized and client-driven supports, and focus on social and community integration.

Systemic problems related to affordable and supportive housing are well documented<sup>x</sup>. We need to be careful that we do not make individuals responsible for what are system failures. We also need to problematize the notion of risk and think about it in a nuanced way. We know that FMH clients are at greater risk of being harmed than of harming others. We should be careful not to overstate the risk of violence they pose to the public as they are generally low risk to re-offend<sup>xi</sup>. Prevailing myths around their violence greatly compound the barriers they face in re-integration upon release. Lastly, it is important that we move away from pathologizing individuals' inability to meet their needs by framing it as 'risk' given the systemic and often insurmountable barriers to accessing affordable housing. In Toronto for example, in a 2-year period, over 4,000 new people applied while less than 600 were placed

in supportive housing<sup>xii</sup>. There is a distinct danger that in a climate of scarcity, assignments of risk can become new methods of gatekeeping, which block clients' access to housing and eventual release.

There is no argument in regards to assessing clients for housing suitability but the question is how and using what method. Without doubt, there are clients who present psychological and behavioural challenges, which can impede efforts at finding appropriate housing. Nonetheless, it is a challenge that we have to be prepared to meet. We can rise to this challenge by doing a number of things: (1) Provide education on ethical and appropriate use of risk assessment; (2) Help teams develop a comprehensive framework of assessment using a variety of measures and strategies to assess multiple domains in a fulsome way; (3) Encourage teams to use a strengths based assessment to develop a comprehensive view of the client; (4) Offer consults on a regular basis to support housing teams; (5) Help teams develop safety plans that address safety concerns for the client, the staff, as well as other residents; (6) Support efforts to create conditions under which clients can succeed; (7) Support staff training for working with forensic clients; (8) Train teams on evidence based interventions. Collaborating with colleagues across sectors to serve forensic clients is good practice and psychology can play a key role in this regard. Lastly, we need to join our colleagues in advocating for supportive housing and work with them to implement best practices in housing and rehabilitation.



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<sup>i</sup> Actuarialism is the method of statistically calculating and aggregating risk data and is steeped in the probability calculations of the insurance industry with 20th-century extension into the arenas of social welfare and penalty. Within criminal justice one of the first risk assessment tools was the parole predictor designed by Burgess in 1928.

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<sup>xii</sup> Seeking supportive housing: Characteristics, needs and outcomes of applicants to the Access Point. Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Access Point Waiting List Analysis, March 2018. Frank Sirotych, Anna Durbin, Greg Suttor, Seong-gee Um and Lin Fang. *Prepared for The Access Point, Toronto*.

# AP-LS 2018: Lobby ducks, plea bargaining & beyond

By **Alisha Salerno**

**Ph.D. Candidate  
York University**

I had the pleasure of attending the annual American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS) conference, which was held from March 8<sup>th</sup> to March 10<sup>th</sup> in Memphis, Tennessee. This year's conference brought together researchers, practitioners, advocates and community members to network and talk about the latest psychology and law research. There was certainly something for everyone in the conference program, which boasted an impressive 350 talks, 200 poster sessions and 3 exciting plenary sessions! To give you a brief idea of what the conference looked like, the three-day program included sessions on experimental topics like wrongful conviction, plea bargaining, jury decision-making, false confessions, police behaviour as well as clinical topics such as psychopathy, risk-assessment, treatment programs, and mental health in vulnerable populations, just to name a few.

Data-Blitzes sessions were also introduced into the program this year, which were a hit with many since they didn't have an overarching theme. They also served as a nice sampling of different types of research contained in one single session.

The conference was held at the opulent Peabody Hotel in Downtown Memphis, a Tennessee landmark famous for its in-house lobby ducks, which proved to be quite a distraction for conference goers. AP-LS also featured an exciting new initiative this year, whereby local high school students were invited to attend the conference and immerse themselves in the psych and law research world. This initiative was part of a larger community outreach project, which also saw researchers from the conference presenting at local schools in Memphis. I think this is a great initiative and a great way to get young people excited about post-secondary education and the psychology and law field.

For many, including myself, one of the highlights of this year's conference was the Friday plenary session, a panel on juvenile solitary confinement. The panel featured Jenner Furst, director of *Time: the Kalief Browder Story*. For those of you who are unfamiliar with his story, Kalief was imprisoned on Riker's Island for three years, two spent in solitary confinement, after he was accused of stealing a backpack at the age of 16. During the plenary session, Furst told

a full room of eager audience members about his personal experiences while following Kalief's tragic life and how profoundly Kalief was impacted by his time spent in solitary. Kalief's story is devastating, but as Furst told the audience, Kalief was not an anomaly or rare case – a powerful message and call to those of us in this field. For those of you who haven't seen the documentary, I would encourage you to head to Netflix and take the time to watch Kalief's story. Recommending it to those around you is also a great way to get your non-academic friends and family interested in our field and in this very current and relevant issue.

One notable trend in this year's conference program was the sharp increase in plea bargaining research. This year, there were three full sessions entirely devoted to plea bargaining research, which is certainly a notable change from last year's conference, which featured only a few sparse talks. I had the pleasure of attending two of these plea-bargaining sessions, where I learned about some of the exciting research happening right now in both Canada and the United States. For those interested in any of the research featured at AP-LS this year, I would encourage you to head over to Twitter and search the hashtag #APLS2018 where you can find micro-abstracts and one-sentence summaries of some of the research presented at AP-LS. Speaking of trends, while many researchers take to twitter to live-tweet conferences, there is a growing number of attendees at AP-LS who tweet only in haikus for the duration of the conference! Certainly, a fun and novel way to document and share your conference experience.

One of the great features of AP-LS is that it is interdisciplinary in nature. At the conference I came across many other graduate students and academics like myself, but also lawyers, clinicians and jury consultants amongst others. Like after any good conference, I left Memphis

feeling a bit cognitively drained, but also reinvigorated, inspired and ready to get back to work. For me, conferences are a great reminder of why I do what I do, and make all the long hours, sleepless nights, and endless amounts of writing and paperwork all well worth it.

# 2018 Forensic Psychology Day @ X

**By Claire Keenan & Jennifer Aftanas**

## **St. Francis Xavier University**

Forensic Psychology students at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX) in Antigonish, Nova Scotia hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> annual *Forensic Psychology Day @ X* on Friday, March 16, 2018. The day consisted of a series of talks and presentations by forensic researchers and practitioners, including "Friends of Forensic Psychology" - StFX alumni, community members, and others (including correctional staff) who contribute to the success of the Forensic Psychology program at StFX.

The day began with introductions from Dr. Watt, graduating students Rachel Martin and Margaret Zjadewicz, as well as a welcoming ceremony by StFX Indigenous Student Representative Kashya Young. Ms Young began by acknowledging that the event was taking place on Mi'kmaq soil and then performed the traditional Mi'kmaq smudging ceremony, inviting audience members to participate. This was followed by a Graduate Student Symposium consisting of Catherine Gallagher (University of New Brunswick), Kathleen Hyland (St. Mary's University), Carly MacCuspic (University of Waterloo) and Jared Uhlman (Wilfred Laurier University). Ms. Gallagher's presentation, entitled "I Use to Cope", focused on the

connection between anxiety and substance use disorders. Her research includes incarcerated women who are high in anxiety sensitivity (AS: fear of arousal-related sensations or "fear of fear"). Ms. Hyland, an MSc student at Saint Mary's University and StFX alumna, spoke of her research into alternative questions within police interviews. She has analysed the Reid model for its guilt-presumptive approach and the confirmation bias that comes from it. Ms. MacCuspic described the Capstone Project she worked on during her Masters of Social Work degree. Ms. McCuspic currently works as a social worker in New Glasgow, NS. Mr. Uhlman also has a Masters in Social Work and captivated the audience with his work as a Dialectical Behaviour Therapist (DBT), a type of therapy designed specifically for the treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder. He highlighted some of the key components of the treatment: skills group, individual therapy, and phone consultation.

The day continued with two talks from faculty members from the new MSc in Forensic Psychology at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, NS. Dr. Marc Patry, Chair of the Psychology Department, gave a talk on the history and evolution of Mr. Big Stings - a major crime investigative technique. He highlighted a few key cases, such as *R. v. Hart* (2014), in which the Mr. Big Sting was employed and some of the new Supreme Court of Canada guidelines for its use. StFX Alumna, Dr. Meg Ternes, gave a talk on substance abuse and memory for homicide. Dr. Ternes explained to the audience that the association between memory loss and substance abuse is not as straightforward as commonly thought. Her research shows that some people can remember vivid details of their crimes despite their use of substances.

One of the most highly anticipated events of the morning was the talk by a minimum security inmate at the Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick. Almost 20 years into a sentence of life (x2), "Paul" shared what life was like in

prison, his daily routine, and how he has been able to cascade from medium to minimum, through good behaviour and community service. He was very receptive to questions and fielded many of them from the audience members, including questions from a local judge.

The lunch break allowed students, faculty, and guests to circle the room and admire the many posters prepared by practicum students. These posters displayed and described the type of work that students do in their practicum placements. These placements include working with community-based organizations, government agencies, provincial correctional centres, and federal prisons. Students reported on their work with parole officers at Nova Institution, a federal women's prison in Truro, NS, and at Springhill Institution for men. After lunch, Cathie Bell, the facilitator of the canine program at Nova Institution took to the stage with one of her beagles to demonstrate how she teaches the women offenders to train service dogs with operant conditioning techniques. The canine program is designed to teach the women the principles of learning and behavioural modification, as well as responsibility and marketable skills for after release. The dogs are trained to provide assistance to people in need (e.g., individuals with mental and physical struggles).

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the keynote speaker, Judge Laurie Halfpenny-MacQuarrie, who presides over the Wellness Court in Port Hawkesbury, NS and the new Indigenous Court in Wagmatcook, NS. The Judge explained the purpose and goals of diversion courts, whereby offenders are diverted from the traditional courts and jails into treatment programs. Successful participants receive a certificate upon graduating from the program. The Judge described the many successful cases she has seen go through her court over the past ten years.



"Paul", the minimum security inmate from Dorchester Penitentiary



Judge Laurie Halfpenny-MacQuarrie



The final highlight of the day was the Alumni Panel who came to share how they got from X (StFX) to where they are today. The panel included people from the criminal justice system (e.g., Sheriff Derek Atwood) and the Correctional system (e.g., psychologist Paul Murphy), as well as clinicians (psychologist Angelina MacLellan) and even IBM (Stewart Barclay). Panelists shared the highlights and challenges of their respective jobs and encouraged student audience members to pursue their goals with enthusiasm and not be dismayed if their journey takes unexpected twists and turns. For current students who are trying to figure out their place in the world, the panel allowed a real-life image of what it is like in the "real" world and how to move toward some of these jobs.

In short, Forensic Psychology Day @ X was filled with opportunities for students and professionals and community members alike. Students were able to get a better understanding of different career paths, demonstrate their current research/placements, and celebrate their placement supervisors. Professionals were able to network. Community members got an inside look at the broad scope of topics at the interface of psychology and law.



A few of the posters prepared by practicum students



A few of the posters prepared by practicum students

# Working with Sexualizing At-Risk Youth: Challenges and Learning Outcomes

By Jessica Sciaraffa

Ph.D. Candidate,  
University of Alberta

As a doctoral student in the School and Clinical Child Psychology program at the University of Alberta, I had the opportunity to complete a practicum placement in the LiNKS clinic of Edmonton's iHuman Youth Society. iHuman is a non-profit organization that engages Edmonton's traumatized youth (aged 12 to 24) who exhibit high-risk lifestyles with the goal of fostering positive personal and skill development, self-esteem, and community re-integration through mentorship, social and mental health supports, crisis intervention, and creativity/arts-based programming. Many of the youth iHuman serves deal with multiple issues that make their lives challenging, such as poverty, homelessness, addictions, mental health difficulties, gang affiliation, historical and on-going physical and sexual trauma, prostitution, familial abuse and neglect, and involvement in the child welfare and criminal justice systems, including incarceration. The

LiNKS clinic is integral to iHuman and houses social workers, community physicians and nurses, and mental health support workers, such as counsellors and a psychologist, with the aim of providing health promotion and mental health intervention supports to youth and reducing the stigma that may prevent youth from seeking appropriate health and emotional support.

My role as a practicum student in the LiNKS clinic involved providing support to the youth through psycho-educational and mental health assessments, as well as through individual and trauma-informed counselling. I would like to reflect on the challenges and learnings I experienced working with particularly "sexualizing" high-risk youth primarily in a counselling capacity in this unique and challenging setting. I use the term "sexualizing" to refer broadly to youth who expressed a sexual and/or romantic interest and attraction, had a tendency to sexualize the therapeutic relationship, and who exhibited inappropriate sexual behaviour towards me. Although I had prior clinical experience with this, I was not prepared for the intensity and frequency of such encounters as they occurred at iHuman. This setting was unique from any other that I had ever worked at before in that it allowed the youth and counsellor a free-flowing, non-structured, and sometimes chaotic, space to establish trust and build relationships, which arguably made it more difficult to maintain professional boundaries.

This sexual attraction and inappropriate sexual behaviour manifested itself both in and outside of the counselling room in various ways, such as "picking up" behaviour/asking for my personal contact information, incessant flirting, staring/body checking, and complimenting of my physical appearance. Other, perhaps more concerning, behaviours included displays of jealousy and possessiveness (e.g., resentment towards other youth displaying similar sexual/romantic interest, attempts to isolate my attentions), non-consensual and "surprise"

physical contact (e.g., hand kissing), attempts at getting me alone by coaxing me to stay past iHuman closing hours, and “playfully” blocking pathways to initiate physical closeness. Taken out of the clinical context, these behaviours would constitute workplace sexual harassment. As research would suggest, however, client feelings of romantic and/or sexual attraction towards the counsellor are quite common, with feelings of intimacy, whether sexual or not, being inherent facets of many therapeutic encounters (Hayes, 2014).

These experiences underlined the importance of developing a clear conceptualization of the youths’ sexualizing behaviours, and of understanding where the youth were coming from when they were sexualizing me and our relationship. Given youths’ trauma backgrounds (e.g., sexual abuse) and experience being immersed in a sexualized “street culture”, many of the youth had themselves been sexualized by others from a young age and were actively sexualizing themselves (e.g., self-prostitution). Experiences with, for instance, female street prostitutes and witnessing domestic violence often perpetrated towards a female figure naturally contributed to a distorted and hyper-sexualized view of women. Following a relational and attachment-based perspective of trauma, I came to understand the youths’ sexualizing behaviours as attempts to fulfill vital attachment needs for intimacy, as well as re-enactments in the therapeutic relationship of dysfunctional and hyper-sexualized relational patterns from previous and personal relationships (Pearlman & Courtois, 2005). The youths’ trauma histories, coupled with their mental health issues, developmental delays, drug addictions, difficulty with impulse control, poor social skills, and boundary difficulties inevitably set the stage for inappropriate sexual behaviour to arise.

It was important to address youths’ sexualizing behaviour in a direct but therapeutic manner that sensitively and non-judgmentally

For more information on  
iHuman Youth Society:  
<http://ihumanyouthsociety.org/>

communicated my intolerance for such behaviour. I clearly communicated my counselling role, practiced caution around traditional hugging practices that were unique to iHuman, made efforts to not personalize youths’ sexualizing behaviour, and I taught and modelled clear and appropriate boundaries and perspective-taking skills. Supervision also offered the opportunity to explore my own reactions to clients’ sexualizing behaviours towards me, such as my feelings of being disrespected, frustration around not being taken seriously, self-doubts around my helping skills, and perhaps most taboo, my occasional feelings of reciprocated sexual attraction. Supervision offered a non-judgmental space to conceptualize, normalize, manage, and cope with my own feelings of sexual attraction, to deal with the accompanying guilt and discomfort, and to explore the potential roots of my attraction.

Although the code of ethics for psychologists clearly states that counsellors/therapists are strictly prohibited from engaging in sexual relations with clients (Canadian Psychological Association, 2017, Standard II.28), therapist sexual misconduct is one of the most common allegations in malpractice suits (American Psychological Association, 2003). Despite the youths’ sexualizing behaviours, a myriad of factors kept me from getting involved, including an understanding of where the youth were coming from when engaging in these behaviours, along with good supervision, a personal and professional sense of right and

wrong, and an acute awareness of the youths' vulnerability and unequal therapeutic power dynamics.

In summary, my practicum placement at iHuman has been very valuable in fostering my professional growth in working with sexualizing at-risk youth. It has emphasized the importance of developing a clear conceptualization of the youths' sexualizing behaviours, of accepting and being open to exploring my own sexuality, and of engaging in reflective practice and maintaining a constant state of self-monitoring and self-awareness. It has increased my knowledge and skills in addressing these behaviours effectively in a fast-paced and chaotic clinical environment, which ultimately helped me provide more effective counselling services to iHuman youth that focused on increasing their understanding and unpacking the deeper roots of their behaviour.

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# Book Review: Motivational Interviewing with Offenders

By  
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Earlier this year, I had the privilege of being asked to review *Motivational Interviewing with Offenders: Engagement, Rehabilitation, and Reentry*, by Jill D. Stinson and Michael D. Clark. My review can be summed up as follows: No matter your credentials, nor how long you've been doing this work, if you work with offenders and have not yet read this book, you simply must. *Motivational Interviewing with Offenders* is, IMHO, one of the best books available on this subject. If you read only one book on this topic, *Motivational Interviewing with Offenders* should be the one.

This 250-ish page volume is divided into 15 chapters. Chapter 1 situates MI within current programs and provides an introduction to theoretical constructs. Chapter 2 focuses on the "spirit" of MI (which is woven throughout the book as part of MI's core philosophy), such as the partnership that is formed with the client, and essential therapist ways of being to develop and maintain this partnership. Chapters 3 and 4 address the arts of listening and interviewing, incorporating the capacity to listen as an essential component of MI and therapeutic skill. As with all chapters, numerous practical strategies to achieve the skill are provided, along with potential roadblocks and, importantly,

strategies to overcome such blocks. Chapters 5 and 6 provide a comprehensive treatment of both building effective working relationships with clients and using this relationship in practice to benefit the client and to achieve treatment goals. Essential practical strategies for effective communication are provided throughout these chapters. Yet more practical tools and strategies are provided in the following chapters that focus on the change process, including building upon clients' existing strengths to assist in achieving long-term, meaningful goals. The final chapters, 13 through 15, address research support for MI and, not surprisingly, practical strategies for implementing MI in service settings. These chapters also address how to easily develop and acquire the necessary skills to effectively use MI techniques, as well as practical strategies to address misunderstandings about the use of MI with offenders and resistance to its use on such grounds that it "coddles" offenders.

It is probably obvious by now that one of the things I like best about *Motivational Interviewing with Offenders: Engagement, Rehabilitation, and Reentry* is its focus on practical strategies and techniques. Too often, we buy a book that promises to give us this level of detail but that ends up on the shelf because it didn't go quite far enough beyond theory – it was useful, but not practical. This practical focus, in my view, makes the book an excellent complement to training and supervision in correctional and treatment settings. I would also recommend it as a refresher for seasoned professionals – clinical personnel, correctional officers, parole and probation officers, assessors, anyone who works with offenders.

I did find it odd when reading the book to find the research support for MI in the later chapters. This was relatively minor, however, and reinforced the purpose of the book –to convey as deep an understanding of MI, its fundamental principles, and its application as is possible in written format. At which, IMHO, the authors have definitely succeeded.



# Recent Publications

Hogan, N. R., & Olver, M. E. (2018): A prospective examination of the predictive validity of five structured instruments for inpatient violence in a secure forensic hospital. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2018.1431339>

This prospective study investigated the predictive validity of five structured risk/forensic instruments for inpatient violence risk in a secure forensic hospital. Episodes of inpatient violence and the following instruments were each coded from hospital files: Historical Clinical Risk Management 20–Version 3 (HCR-20<sup>V3</sup>), Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCL-R), Short-Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability (START), Revised Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG-R), and Violence Risk Scale (VRS). The dynamic/clinical instruments (HCR-20<sup>V3</sup>, START, and VRS) predicted inpatient violence, even after controlling for the static measures. The results indicated that structured risk instruments may be applied to the assessment of inpatient violence risk.

Hilton, N. Z., Ham, E., & Green, M. (2018). The roles of antisociality and neurodevelopmental problems in criminal violence and clinical outcomes among male forensic inpatients. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 45, 293-315. doi:10.1177/0093854817745911

Research has identified developmental pathways linking childhood abuse and poor parenting to cognitive impairment or general antisociality in adolescence. We examined pathways in adult offenders, aiming to reproduce pathways identified in the limited existing research with male forensic inpatients and testing their robustness and relation to clinical outcomes. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), we examined antisociality, neurodevelopmental problems, and antisocial parenting as statistical predictors of criminal violence, in 638 cases. Using exploratory factor analysis and SEM, we developed and tested similar models for health status on admission and institutional outcomes (symptoms and aggressive behaviors) in subsamples of 269 and 335 cases. A three-factor measurement model was obtained, replicating previous work and supporting antisociality and neurodevelopmental problems as pathways to criminal violence and poor adult health. Models of institutional outcomes were not well supported. Findings indicate robustness of antisocial development and neurodevelopmental pathways

**Hilton, N. Z. & Radatz, D. (2017). The criminogenic and noncriminogenic treatment needs of intimate partner violence offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. Advanced online publication. doi:10.1177/0306624X17740015**

The criminogenic needs of general offenders have been empirically studied, but the criminogenic treatment needs of intimate partner violence (IPV) offenders, or how they compare with other violent or nonviolent offenders, have not been as thoroughly explored. Therefore, we examined and compared the criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs of 99 IPV offenders, 233 non-IPV violent offenders, and 103 nonviolent offenders, all of whom were men who had undergone institutional forensic assessment. Results indicated that IPV offenders had more treatment needs than the other two offender groups, including the Central Eight criminogenic needs. These findings support a focus on criminogenic treatment needs in batterer intervention programs for men, consistent with the principles of effective intervention for offenders.

**McKee, S. A., & Hilton, N. Z. (2017). Co-occurring substance use, PTSD, and IPV victimization: Implications for female offender services. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Advanced online publication. doi:10.1177/1524838017708782**

The co-occurrence of substance use disorders (SUDs) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among women who have been the victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) is complex and causal associations cannot be assumed. Although the presence of co-occurring disorders among IPV victims is a well-established research finding, there is a need for improved understanding of their prevalence and related mental health treatment requirements among female offenders. We review research indicating that service providers working with IPV victims can expect to encounter women with extensive concurrent problems and examine evidence for integrated treatment for SUD, PTSD, and IPV. We propose an outline for assessing and treating SUD and PTSD among female offenders who have experienced IPV victimization. We intend this review to build on previous calls in the co-occurring disorders literature and help integrate the research and treatment evaluation literatures in a way that points to practical implications for policy and practice in female offender services.

# Careers

**Have you checked out the job openings on the CPA website lately?**

**If not, here are some positions that might interest you.**

Providence Care Hospital, Kingston, Ontario, is looking for 1 Psychologist (Autonomous Practice or eligible for Supervised Practice in Clinical & Forensic areas)

**Website:** <http://web.cpa.ca/new/docs/File/Careers/2015-01/AMS-18040361295.pdf>

Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, is looking for 1 Psychologist (Autonomous Practice or Supervised Practice)

**Website:** <http://web.cpa.ca/new/docs/File/Careers/2015-01/AMS-18042661625.pdf>

Saskatchewan Health Authority (North Battleford, SK) is looking for 2 Psychologists (Forensic and Non-Forensic)

**Website:** <http://web.cpa.ca/new/docs/File/Careers/2015-01/AMS-18040661376.pdf>

Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, London, Ontario, is looking for 2 Psychologists

**Website:** <http://web.cpa.ca/new/docs/File/Careers/2015-01/AMS-18042461567.pdf>

**For a complete listing of career opportunities, see:**

<https://www.cpa.ca/careers/>

# Upcoming Conferences

## **Annual Meeting of the International Association of Forensic Mental Health Services**

June 12-14, 2018, Antwerp, Belgium

<http://www.iafmhs.org/2018conference>

## **European Association of Psychology and Law Conference**

June 26-29, 2018, Turku, Finland

<http://eapl2018.fi/>

## **Canadian Psychological Association 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**

June 26-30, 2018, Montreal, Quebec

<http://www.icap2018.com/>

## **British Society of Criminology Conference**

July 3-6, 2018, Birmingham City, UK

<http://www.britsocrim.org/conference/2018-conference/>

## **American Psychological Association Annual Convention**

August 9-12, 2018, San Francisco, CA

<http://www.apa.org/convention/>

## **Annual Crimes Against Children Conference**

August 13-16, 2018, Dallas, Texas

<http://www.cacconference.org/>

## **International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders**

August 28-31, 2018, Vilnius, Lithuania

<https://www.iatso.org/>

## **37<sup>th</sup> Annual Research and Treatment Conference**

October 17-20, 2018, Vancouver, BC

<https://www.atsa.com/conference>

## **28<sup>th</sup> National Organization for the Treatment of Abusers – Annual International Conference**

September 19-21, 2018, Glasgow, UK

<http://www.nota.co.uk/conference/>



Turku, Finland



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