Sexual Psychopaths: Implications for Criminal Investigation

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Misconceptions about Psychopaths

- “They’re Crazy”
- Not Psychotic
- “Psychopaths are Serial Killers”
- 90% of serial killers are Psychopaths but the inverse is not true
- “Most of them are in Jail”
- Approx. 15-20% of inmate population
- “This is ASPD, look in the DSM-IV”
- They are a much deeper subset of ASPD
Misconceptions about Psychopaths

- “They don’t know the difference between right and wrong”
- **They know the difference, they just don’t care**
- “Psychopaths have no emotion”
- **They have emotions but not for you. They are totally self-absorbed**
- “They need treatment, not incarceration”
- **Presently there is no treatment being used that has had any significant effect**
- “They have a mental illness and should not be held responsible for their actions”
- **They do not have a mental illness and psychopathy does not diminish responsibility**
Words But No Music (Hare, 1995)

- “Intraspecies predators who use charm, manipulation, intimidation, and violence to control others and to satisfy their own selfish needs.“
- Lack conscience and feelings for others.
- "Language and words for psychopaths are only word deep, there is no emotional colouring behind it.”
- "A psychopath can use a word like 'I love you' but it means nothing more to him than if he said 'I'll have a cup of coffee'."
Psychopaths

- Only an abstract, intellectual awareness of feelings of others
- Not emotionally, socially connected to others
- Unguided by morality or dictates of conscience
- No loyalty to any person, group, code, organization, or philosophy
Research on Psychopathy

- Psychopaths are poorer risks for conditional release; tend to have longer, more varied and more serious criminal histories; they are more consistently violent than nonpsychopaths; and their use of violence appears to be less situational and more directed towards particular goals (Serin et al, 1989).
Criminal Population

- 80% Non-Psychopaths
- 20% Psychopaths
Child Molesters

90%

10%

Psychopaths
Non-Psychopaths
Rapists

- 65% Non-Psychopaths
- 35% Psychopaths
Molesters / Rapists

- Psychopaths: 35%
- Non-Psychopaths: 65%
Hostage Takers

50% Psychopaths

50% Non-Psychopaths
Serial Killers

90% Psychopaths
10% Non-Psychopaths
How Important is Psychopathy?

• “Psychopathy is the single most important clinical construct in the criminal justice system”
  — Hare, 1996

• Psychopathy “may be the most important forensic concept in the early 21st century.”
  — Monahan, 2006
A prototypical psychopath is an individual who has a cluster of characteristics, including:
• lack of empathy guilt or remorse for antisocial or harmful acts
• deceitful and manipulative
• Egocentric and grandiose
• behavior and emotions that tend to be shallow and superficial
• an enormous sense of entitlement
• dominant & controlling
• an impulsive, nomadic lifestyle
• irresponsibility
• need for excitement / risk taking
• propensity for manipulation, intimidation and predatory violence

• a generally unstable, antisocial, or asocial lifestyle — not necessarily criminal — in which others are used or victimized
Clinical & Forensic Applications

• Diagnosis

• Treatment planning

• Level of supervision required

• Risk assessment

• Part of psychological/psychiatric workup
Law Enforcement Applications

- Evaluations of dangerousness
- Interview techniques
- Hostage negotiations
- Crime scene analysis
- Profiling
ASPD

impulsive, irresponsible, antisocial behaviors

PCL-R

grandiosity
shallow emotions
egocentricity
lack empathy
manipulation
Sociopath vs. Psychopath

- Similarity between Sociopathy and Antisocial Personality Disorder (DSM IV)
- 50-80% of inmates have ASPD
- 15-20% of inmates are psychopathic
- Psychopaths are not mentally ill – Bermuda Example
- Camouflage element - no loyalty
The PCL-R 2 x 4 Hierarchical Model

Facet 1
Interpersonal

Facet 2
Affective

Facet 3
Lifestyle

Facet 4
Antisocial

Factor 1

Factor 2

Psychopathy

Glib/Superficial
Grandiose
Lying
Conning
Lacks Remorse
Shallow Affect
Lack of Empathy
Not Responsible
Needs Stimulation
Parasitic
Lacks Goals
Impulsive
Irresponsible
Poor Controls
Early Problems
Delinquency
Revocation of Release
Criminal Versatility
27+
Three Latent Classes

- Manipulative
- Aggressive
- Sociopathic
PREDATORY NATURE

Need Gratification
Lack of Empathy
Poor Behavioural Controls
SEXUAL DEVIANCE
Rick – Arousal to 6 yr old
Highlights from Extracting Information: Interviewing 201
Des Lauriers-Varin & St-Yves 2006

The questionnaire items that were most often chosen as not being at all relevant to the “motivation to confess” were:

- “frightened of the police” (91%)
- “frightened of being locked up” (81%)
- “police pressure during the interview” (76%).
Interviewing 201

• Fallacy of Uniqueness - normalizing
  “we all fantasize”

• Not “if” but “when” - Assume it has occurred
  “How many times do you generally masturbate per week?”

• Over the Moon - See upper limits of quantity or impact
  “How many times a day did you fantasize about offending? 40, 50 times a day?”
Interviewing 201

- Repeat questions
- Suspend Judgment
- Guard your buttons – check your reaction
- Use challenges / Alternate with support.
- Focus on inconsistencies and illogical reasoning
- Focus on inconsistencies between his account and victim’s account
Interviewing 201

- **Rationalization** - From the framework in which the offender rationalized the behaviour. (i.e. DHIC)

- **Minimization** – Foot in the Door (i.e. “gave him a good shot”)

- **Joining** – Strokes the offender ego (i.e. “you’re a solid stand up guy”)
Interviewing 201

- Use open ended questions, indirect and direct questions
- Avoid power struggles - use joining
- Remain persistent, don’t reduce anxiety
- Change topic areas
- Narrow the question down to get agreement
Interviewing the Psychopathic Personality

- Ego Dominant
- Charismatic
- Impulsive
- Prone to Boredom
- Grandiose
- Strives for Recognition
- Manipulative
- Abrasive/Derogatory
- Little Fear

- Feed to self-report
- “Enlighten Me”
- Emotionless/Cool
- Time is on our side
- Respect by Respected
- Co-construct solid option
- Controlled Choices
- Professional/Business
- No Intimidation
Interviewing the Psychopathic Personality

- Consequences not a factor
- Blames Others
- Underestimates Problem
- Exaggerates/Lies
- No Loyalty
- Sense of Entitlement
- Competitive

- Face-saving Out
- Use others’ incompetence
- Use Minimization
- Absorb and use later
- Caution with TPI
- Stroke the Ego
- Don’t Argue
Interviewing the Inadequate Personality

- Ego Deflated
- Withdrawn
- Cognitive Deficits
- Emotionally vulnerable
- Underestimates Problem
- Rationalizes Actions
- Strives for Acceptance
- Manipulative
- Abrasive/Derogatory
- Blames Others

- Empathic Response
- Active Listening
- Use simple language
- Emotional Hooks
- Use Minimization
- Absorb & Agree*
- Rapport Building
- Controlled Choices
- Professional/Business
- Use others’ incompetence
Interviewing 201

• Build the Bridge before you try and cross
• Push – but know when to do it
• Use “successive approximation”
  – Discuss other historical material first
  – Discuss other sexual material as a less anxiety provoking lead b
• Avoid emotionally laden words
  – e.g. rape, pedophile, sadist
Meeting’s Over
Changing Context

- Affects behaviour
- Dismantles guardedness
- Reduces or increases anxiety
- Changes the playing field
- Opens a different stream of affect & cognition
- Provides a healing environment

Context in your life – campfire/vehicle at night/ski lift/boat/horseback
Focus on Needs

- Needs Motivate (self perception)
  - Power / Ego / Greed
  - Perfection / Revenge / Rage
- Behaviour can be predicted (Crime Cycle)
- Behaviour reinforced with reward (M.O.)